DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 297 480 EA 020 350

AUTHOR Paulu, Nancy
TITLE Experiences in School Improvement. The Story of 16 American Districts.
INSTITUTION Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO PIP-88-843
PUB DATE Aug 88
NOTE 92p.
AVAILABLE FROM Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 (GPO Stock No. 065-000-00343-1; $4.50).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Role; *Change Strategies; *Educational Change; *Educational Improvement; Educational Innovation; Elementary Secondary Education; *Excellence in Education; Government School Relationship; Politics of Education; *State School District Relationship; Superintendents
IDENTIFIERS Arkansas; Colorado; Missouri; New Hampshire; New Jersey; *Project Education Reform; South Carolina; Tennessee; Utah

ABSTRACT

This booklet describes the results of "Project Education Reform," a partnership involving the U.S. Department of Education, 8 state governors, and 16 school districts--2 in each participating state--representing a cross-section of the nation. It was generally agreed that a good basis for needed educational changes were the 13 recommendations contained in "Time for Results," the 1986 report of the National Governor's Association. Each of the 16 school districts was asked to select at least 3 of the 13 areas in which they would create innovative programs and carry out reforms. Methods considered for improving schools included: designing plans for student evaluation, developing ways to evaluate principals, and involving parents more actively in their children's education. The first part of this report is an overview of the project that discusses the background, lists the 13 recommendations, summarizes the reforms in each district, and then discusses the superintendent's role in reform: building trust, developing plans for reform, communicating the plans, and carrying them out. Also discussed are barriers to reform. such as lack of time and competing priorities, money constraints, state and federal laws and regulations, too great reliance on tests, problems with teachers' unions, problems with size in large districts, negative community attitudes, negative staff attitudes, inadequate facilities, and lack of leadership continuity. The overview concludes with a discussion of the federal/state/district partnership and the results of the project in general. Site reports from each of the 16 school districts follows. The districts are: Arkansas (Little Rock and Springdale), Colorado (Mapleton and Montrose), Missouri (Columbia and Independence), New Hampshire (Timberland and White Mountains Regional School Districts), New Jersey (Paramus and Union), South Carolina (Orangeburg and Spartanburg), Tennessee (Memphis and Oak Ridge), and Utah (Provo and Salt Lake City). The report concludes with 15 recommendations from the participating superintendents. (TE)

ED297480

# EXPERIENCES IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

EA 020 350

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

U.S. Department of Education

# EXPERIENCES IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

## THE STORY OF 16 AMERICAN DISTRICTS

By Nancy Paulu
Programs for the Improvement of Practice

Office of Educational Research and Improvement
Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs
U.S. Department of Education

August 1988

U.S. Department of Education
William J. Bennett
Secretary

Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs
Peter R. Greer
Deputy Under Secretary

Office of Educational Research and Improvement
Chester E. Finn, Jr.
Assistant Secretary

Programs for the Improvement of Practice
Milton Goldberg
Director

Information Services
Ray Fields
Director

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

# FOREWORD

As a recent superintendent of schools, I am pleased to share the following experiences and recommendations from 2 high school principals and 14 superintendents.

Everyone is inundated with important literature to read concerning the reform movement and effective ways to assist our students and their teachers.

However, this booklet is a bit different from the other readings you do each week. It focuses on what superintendents are thinking and doing, as directly reported by them. Superintendents are vital to the success of the present reform movement in terms of what they do and resist doing.

Nancy Paulu, who visited and listened at each of the school sites, has again earned her reputation as a first-rate observer and writer on educational matters. The principals and superintendents read her draft and agreed that the material you are about to read is indeed what they wish to say to their colleagues.

These educators, along with Secretary of Education William Bennett, Assistant Secretary of Education Checker Finn, and several of our Nation's "educational governors," who constructed this 5-year project, offer the following experiences and ideas to you with the intent that you will learn, use, and be excited by the importance of what can be done for our students.

How might you use this book? If I were still "in the trenches," I would encourage a local group of colleagues to read the book and then discuss its accuracy and application. I would write several of the principals and superintendents and start an informal network on topics of mutual interest. And, I would follow the progress of this project over the next couple of years. I hope these ideas help you.

Peter R. Greer
Deputy Under Secretary

# TABLE OF CONTENTS


FOREWORD . . . . . iii
GOVERNORS CONTRIBUTING TO PROJECT EDUCATION REFORM . . . . . vii
SUPERINTENDENTS AND OTHER LOCAL EDUCATORS CONTRIBUTING TO PROJECT EDUCATION REFORM . . . . . ix
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY . . . . . xi

PART 1 PROJECT EDUCATION REFORM — AN OVERVIEW

Background . . . . . 1
A First Report Card . . . . . 2
The 13 Recommendations . . . . . 3
The Superintendent's Role in Reform . . . . . 6
Building Trust . . . . . 7
Developing Plans for Reform . . . . . 9
Communicating the Plans . . . . . 11
Carrying Out the Plans . . . . . 13
Barriers to Reform . . . . . 14
Lack of Time and Competing Priorities . . . . . 15
Money . . . . . 16
State Laws and Regulations . . . . . 18
Teacher Certification Requirements . . . . . 18
Bilingual Education Laws . . . . . 18
Vocational Education Laws . . . . . 19
Course Requirements . . . . . 19
School Facilities . . . . . 19
Federal Laws and Regulations . . . . . 20
Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 . . . . . 20
Chapter 1 . . . . . 20
Tests . . . . . 20
Teachers' Unions . . . . . 21
Size . . . . . 22
Negative Community Attitudes . . . . . 22
Negative Staff Attitudes . . . . . 23

Inadequate Facilities . . . . . 24
Lack of Leadership Continuity . . . . . 24
The Partnership . . . . . 25
Results . . . . . 27
Conclusion . . . . . 30

PART 2 PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE AMERICAN SCHOOLS
Visits to 16 School Districts . . . . . 33
Arkansas
Little Rock — Central High School . . . . . 34
Springdale — Springdale High School . . . . . 36
Colorado
Mapleton . . . . . 39
Montrose . . . . . 41
Missouri
Columbia . . . . . 44
Independence . . . . . 47
New Hampshire
Timberlane . . . . . 49
White Mountains . . . . . 51
New Jersey
Paramus . . . . . 53
Union . . . . . 56
South Carolina
Orangeburg . . . . . 58
Spartanburg . . . . . 60
Tennessee
Memphis . . . . . 63
Oak Ridge . . . . . 65
Utah
Provo . . . . . 68
Salt Lake City . . . . . 70

PART 3 THE SUPERINTENDENTS SPEAK
Recommendations . . . . . 75

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . . 79

# Governors Contributing To Project Education Reform

| | |
|---|---|
| Arkansas | Governor Bill Clinton<br>Cochairman, *Time for Results*<br>Chairman, Task Force on Leadership and Management |
| Colorado | Former Governor Richard D. Lamm<br>Chairman, Task Force on Parental Involvement and Choice |
| | Governor Roy Romer |
| Missouri | Governor John Ashcroft<br>Chairman, Task Force on Readiness |
| New Hampshire | Governor John Sununu<br>Chairman, Task Force on Technology |
| New Jersey | Governor Thomas H. Kean<br>Cochairman, *Time for Results*<br>Chairman, Task Force on Teaching |
| South Carolina | Former Governor Richard W. Riley<br>Chairman, Task Force on Readiness |
| | Governor Carroll A. Campbell, Jr. |
| Tennessee | Former Governor Lamar Alexander<br>Chairman, *Time for Results* |
| | Governor Ray McWherter |
| Utah | Governor Norman Bangerter<br>Vice-Chairman, Task Force on School Facilities |

NOTE: *Time for Results* was composed of eight task forces that focused on specific education issues.

# Superintendents And Other Local Educators Contributing To Project Education Reform

## Arkansas

| | |
|---|---|
| Little Rock | George Cannon, Superintendent<br>Angela Sewell, Associate Superintendent<br>Everett Hawks, Principal, Central High School |
| Springdale | Jim Rollins, Superintendent<br>Harry Wilson, Principal, Springdale High School |

## Colorado

| | |
|---|---|
| Mapleton | Jack Blendinger, Superintendent |
| Montrose | Robert Cito, Superintendent |

## Missouri

| | |
|---|---|
| Columbia | Russell Thompson, Superintendent<br>John Stolt, Associate Superintendent for Instruction |
| Independence | Robert Henley, Superintendent |

## New Hampshire

| | |
|---|---|
| Timberlane Regional School District | Terrance Holmes, Superintendent |
| White Mountains Regional School District | Edgar Melanson, Superintendent |

## New Jersey

| | |
|---|---|
| Paramus | Harry Galinsky, Superintendent |
| Union | James Caulfield, Superintendent |

## South Carolina

| | |
|---|---|
| Orangeburg | James Wilsford, Superintendent |
| Spartanburg | Harold Patterson, Superintendent |

## Tennessee

| | |
|---|---|
| Memphis | Willie Herenton, Superintendent<br>Sara Lewis, Assistant Superintendent,<br>Department of Curriculum and Instruction |
| Oak Ridge | Robert Smallridge, Superintendent |

## Utah

| | |
|---|---|
| Provo | James Bergera, Superintendent |
| Salt Lake City | John Bennion, Superintendent |

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What happens when 16 American school districts representing a true cross section of our Nation set out to improve education? What strides can they make toward better schools? What barriers do they encounter along the way? What role do their superintendents play in change? An analyst and writer from the U.S. Department of Education traveled to districts from New Hampshire to South Carolina to Utah seeking answers to these questions. This report reflects what she learned during visits between December 1987 and March 1988.

The 16 districts are part of a unique partnership also involving the U.S. Department of Education and the States of eight governors who helped produce *Time for Results*, the landmark 1986 report from the National Governors' Association. Each school system selected for this partnership was asked to create innovative programs that fit 13 of the report's recommendations. These suggestions for improving schools ranged from designing plans to assess student achievement, to developing ways to evaluate principals, to involving parents more actively in their children's education.

All of the 16 districts possess good leaders, capable of taking the risks that are needed for schools to improve. The superintendents in each district have played a distinctive role in reform by:

- Building trust with their staffs and communities;
- Creating the atmosphere required for reform to flourish;
- Developing a vision for their district's future; and
- Communicating this vision clearly to those who carry out new programs.

The programs that were designed reflect each district's singular needs. Springdale High School in Springdale, Arkansas, has developed a School-Within-a-School dedicated to helping students solve problems and synthesize what they learn. Mapleton, Colorado, places computers in the homes of disadvantaged students — and trains their parents to help their children at the keyboard. Independence, Missouri, provides before- and after-school daycare for school-aged children. Spartanburg, South Carolina, has a comprehensive program to involve parents in their children's education. Orangeburg, South Carolina, created a program offering extra pay to outstanding teachers who assume more responsibilities. Provo and Salt Lake City, Utah, have established

year-round schools. Paramus and Union, New Jersey, have major programs for at-risk preschool children.

The districts' school improvement efforts are not uniformly successful, although the lack of rigorous before-and-after data often makes it difficult to gauge their effectiveness. Often the sole evidence of success is anecdotal; many superintendents complain that lack of expertise and money prevents them from conducting reliable and objective analyses. Furthermore, some reforms are still being planned or have barely gotten out of the starting gate, making it premature to judge how well they work.

Many educators in these 16 districts have encountered roadblocks along the highway to reform. Some districts have found imaginative ways to overcome the obstacles; others have not. Restrictive laws and cumbersome regulations often still stand in their way. So do competing priorities, burdensome tests, teachers' unions, sluggish bureaucracies, negative community or staff attitudes, inadequate school facilities, and a lack of continuity in State and district leadership.

The 16 districts have not yet accomplished all that they would like. But, overall, they are a cause for hope and an inspiration for everyone striving for educational excellence. The superintendents' 15 recommendations, listed in Part 3 of this report, were developed with this end in mind.

# PART 1

## PROJECT EDUCATION REFORM — AN OVERVIEW

### BACKGROUND

Two years ago, a group of well-regarded American school districts joined with State and Federal education leaders in a project hailed as a small but significant step toward education reform.

This landmark partnership grew out of *Time for Results*, the 1986 report from the National Governors' Association that proposed sweeping changes in the public schools. The governors were eager to set in motion the report's ideas for upgrading schools and boosting student achievement. Toward this end, the current, past, and future chairmen of the Association — Governors Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, Thomas Kean of New Jersey, and Bill Clinton of Arkansas — met in Washington with U.S. Secretary of Education William J. Bennett. The four distilled 13 of the report's many recommendations — ones they believed to be most capable of guiding local reform efforts. Then, they agreed that eight governors who had been driving forces in the report's development should each select two school districts willing to create innovative programs that fit these recommendations. Thus began Project Education Reform.

"These school districts will become informal laboratories of education reform," Secretary Bennett said when the partnership was formally launched at a gathering of its members in Washington, D.C. "The results of this experiment will have tremendous potential for all the Nation's schools." Added Chester E. Finn, Jr., the Department's Assistant Secretary for Research and Improvement, "Positive results among these few districts can be a powerful impetus for change in many more of the Nation's 16,000 school districts."

All parties in this endeavor believe that major reform must begin at home — that the Federal government and governors *cannot* create excellent schools, but that communities of school leaders, teachers, parents, and citizens *can*.

Therefore, the 16 districts were given broad flexibility to establish effective programs, and the governors and the U.S. Department of Education agreed to help the 16 eliminate roadblocks to reform, whether they came from outmoded practice or misplaced regulation. In exchange for less regulation, each district was asked to improve educational services and student achievement. The Department also agreed to provide technical assistance, consultation, and referral services.

The partners hoped this project might provide a realistic look at American school reform, because these 16 districts represented a true cross section of our Nation. All possessed strong leaders with a more-than-average commitment to improving schools, as well as staunch community support. But standardized test scores in some of the 16 districts were average or below, and none of the school systems was extraordinarily wealthy. Nor did any of the districts receive extra money for participating in this project; each was expected to make do with what it had.

## A First Report Card

During the reform drive of the eighties, educators and policymakers have learned that enduring change evolves slowly; therefore, Project Education Reform, which began in late 1986, was set up to continue through 1991.

But 5 years is a long wait for a first report card. So between December 1987 and March 1988, a U.S. Department of Education professional visited the 16 districts — 2 each in Arkansas, Colorado, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Utah — to learn what they have accomplished. The representative interviewed superintendents, principals, school board members, teachers, parents, local businessmen, and students. She observed in classrooms, seeking answers to these questions:

- What programs have the 16 districts established, and how far has each program progressed?
- What part have the superintendents played in reform — and how has their role differed from what others have contributed?
- How have local educators planned for change — and encouraged others to support them?
- What barriers impede these districts from producing better and quicker results? How, if at all, have these educators managed to overcome the obstacles?
- How do these educators know that their programs are effective?
- How well is the partnership of Federal, State, and local educators and policymakers working?
- What lessons have the districts learned that might guide other Americans striving for educational excellence?

The Department staffer was curious to learn if a consensus could be reached on these questions, given the 16 districts' extraordinary diversity. Little Rock, Arkansas, and Union, New Jersey, serve urban and suburban communities; Springdale, Arkansas, and the White Mountains, New Hampshire, Regional Schools educate youngsters from a small town and a predominantly rural area. The Timberlane, New Hampshire, Regional School District benefits from the area's rapid economic growth; schools in Mapleton and Montrose, Colorado, feel

repercussions from the region's sagging oil and tourism industries. The Columbia, Missouri, student body is 87 percent white; Orangeburg, South Carolina, 80 percent black. Students in the Paramus, New Jersey, schools speak a total of 49 languages. Salt Lake City and Provo, Utah, enroll large numbers of Mormon children; Memphis, Tennessee, and Spartanburg, South Carolina, lie deep in the Bible Belt.

Striking reminders of the districts' rich and varied histories appear in each of the 16. Truman High School and its madrigal group, the Truman Trutones, bear the namesake of the most famous graduate of the Independence, Missouri, schools. The curriculum guide for Oak Ridge High School, Tennessee, lists an array of science and mathematics courses (including advanced calculus), reflecting the community of scientists who first moved there during World War II to make nuclear weapons. Today, many engineers, researchers, and high technology experts still make their homes in Oak Ridge — and they and their children want the schools to provide a strong science and mathematics program.

But stark as are some contrasts, educators in these districts also share remarkable similarities — in what they value in education and in how they approach school reform. Ask superintendents, principals, teachers, and high school counselors from Orangeburg, South Carolina, to Provo, Utah, what they most want their youngsters to learn in school and they say basic academic skills — reading, writing, speaking, and calculating. They want to graduate students who can compete nationally and internationally with the best and the brightest. Social graces and strong self-esteem also appear high on their lists. "One of our goals is to have our kids see a place for themselves in the world," explained Montrose Superintendent Robert Cito, echoing the sentiments of administrators in the other districts.

## THE 13 RECOMMENDATIONS

Educators in the 16 districts agree that these goals will not materialize without change — that a school system must continually reassess where it is and where it wants to be. "Any organization that attempts to maintain what it is doing is falling behind," says Paramus Superintendent Harry Galinsky. What kind of changes will help reinvent the school for modern times? Virtually all of the superintendents agree that the 13 recommendations distilled from *Time for Results* provide a sound start. They include:

- Redesigning schools to create more productive working and learning environments — for example, by involving teachers in more decisions about discipline or curriculum, or by moving to a year-round calendar;
- Changing the structure of the teaching career — for instance, by linking pay to professional competence and responsibilities;

- Developing a system to evaluate administrators effectively and accurately;
- Creating training programs for school administrators that involve partnerships with colleges, State or regional academies, businesses, and schools;
- Providing for "school-based management" — allowing schools to make more of their own decisions, then holding them accountable for results;
- Involving parents more actively in their children's education;
- Establishing early childhood programs for "at-risk" 3- and 4-year-olds — preschoolers whose social, cognitive, and motor skills lag behind their peers;
- Providing mothers and fathers of preschool children and students with information on how to be successful parents;
- Designing a reliable and valid way to assess student performance so that deficiencies can be corrected;
- Establishing alternative programs for dropouts to attain basic skills and complete high school;
- Developing plans to buy and use educational technologies;
- Establishing training programs to teach the staff how to use technology to solve instructional and management problems; and
- Sharing educational facilities, particularly with community groups providing day care and latchkey services.

To move beyond this list to action, each of the 16 districts was asked to select at least 3 of the 13 areas in which to carry out reforms. Altogether, the districts have established an array of programs:

■ Independence is studying Japanese management techniques to see if they can be used to improve the adversarial relationship of the district's teachers and top school officials, particularly around collective bargaining time. "With a confrontational attitude, we're wasting a lot of our energy," Superintendent Robert Henley explained. District administrators and teachers plan to visit a California automobile factory in which these techniques are being used to learn which of them might apply to Independence.

■ Columbia has established a program to provide practical help for parents of youngsters from birth to 3 years old. (Independence offers a similar one.) In classes and during home visits by trained observers, all of whom themselves are parents, mothers and fathers master everything from how to stop a temper tantrum to how to convince a resistant toddler that it's time for bed. "We have two goals," explains Jerri Deming, the program's coordinator, "to help all kids get off to a good start, and to reduce the stress and maximize the pleasures of parent-

ing." Recent studies of Parents as Teachers indicates the program is accomplishing just that — and is also developing youngsters with superior social and academic skills.

■ The White Mountains Regional School District has provided computers for all of its teachers wanting one. "Computers go wasted on children if teachers aren't comfortable with them," notes Superintendent Edgar R. Melanson. In the 3 years since the first computers were delivered to the district, teachers have used them to improve everything from the quality of lesson plans to the frequency of report cards to parents.

■ The Timberlane schools have put in place a comprehensive teacher evaluation plan that links performance to pay. Superintendent Terrance Holmes reports that the program "has made the life of principals in this district very difficult"; some principals now spend more than half of their 60-hour work weeks observing teachers in classes to help them improve. But many principals believe the program also rewards them in new ways. Mary Gale, principal of Atkinson Academy in Timberlane explains, "This way, I can work alongside teachers to support them and allow them to do the best work they can do." An evaluation found teachers divided in their enthusiasm for the program.

■ Salt Lake City and Provo have established year-round schools that provide students with more but shorter vacations and classes in at least part of all 12 months. Many parents in both school systems initially were skeptical, although today the districts boast widespread support for the restructured school year. Lewis Gardiner, principal of Salt Lake's Whittier Elementary School, organized and sought converts at 40 block parties, where he convinced parents that year-round schools would relieve overcrowding and enable some youngsters to progress faster academically.

These are but a few of the programs in the 16 districts that exemplify reform; fuller descriptions of all of them are contained in Part 2. The programs are not universally successful. Moreover, some are either still being planned or have barely gotten off the starting blocks, making it premature to judge their effectiveness. Significantly, a disproportionate number of those doing well were established long before the start of Project Education Reform, giving educators ample time to iron out the programs' wrinkles. Oak Ridge, Tennessee, for instance, created its much-acclaimed program for at-risk preschoolers in 1965. Furthermore, the districts either struggling hardest to launch programs or move along existing ones are often faced with looming problems that demand immediate attention. Little Rock stalled the creation of a model program to give educators at Central High School more decisionmaking authority this past year when administrators needed to channel energies elsewhere. For example, school officials had to cope with a teachers' strike, the arrival of a new superintendent, the annexation of a neighboring district with a radically different racial composition, and

a court order to reassign to different schools for desegregation purposes virtually all of the district's teachers and students.

Sufficient time to develop these programs, as well as commitment, are key ingredients in their success. But competent leadership and careful planning are also crucial.

## The Superintendent's Role In Reform

Most of what has been written about reform focuses on the importance of good principals and teachers. But the man or woman at the very top is equally crucial if schools are to improve. "If you look at progress, it comes down to the leadership of the superintendent," says Galinsky of Paramus. Governor Kean of New Jersey adds:

> **Although most of the reform reports have largely ignored the superintendent's key role, he or she serves, in many ways, as a bridge between State departments, district boards, and local schools. As [Project Education Reform] clearly shows, superintendents can be, and in many districts are, major catalysts in school restructuring.**

The superintendent is privileged to a special overview that eases his or her ability to direct change. Spartanburg Superintendent Harold Patterson explains, "The superintendent is the only person who has a look at the total system" — at its programs, personnel, and finances. This allows the person in the top job to help the district establish a mission, goals, and objectives. More significantly, it enables the person to create an atmosphere in which reform can flourish.

A superintendent establishes this environment by letting the staff know that change leading to better schools is welcome; he or she encourages staff members and the public to share ideas with each other and with him. To encourage participation, the Montrose superintendent reorganized the school board agendas so that important items come up early in the evening meetings when more people can be present. The superintendent can make himself accessible to anyone with a good idea — and let people know that no suggestion is too silly to express. Furthermore, the superintendent can encourage the staff to take risks, and support them if what seemed to be a sound idea backfires. "People will take risks if they feel they are secure," Holmes of Timberlane explains. Finally, the superintendent can reward those who initiate change. Paramus Superintendent Galinsky invites staff members who have done so to present their ideas or describe their program at a school board meeting. This gives them public recognition and sends a message to the entire staff and community that the district leadership welcomes creativity.

To bring about change, superintendents must be both competent managers and strong educational leaders. Most of the 16 superintendents delegate many managerial tasks in order to devote more time to

reform. Some day-to-day routine, however, inevitably falls into their laps, requiring superintendents who wish to improve their schools to assume a heavy workload. "It's going to take more time and energy to operate in both [managerial and leadership] roles," observes John Bennion from Salt Lake City. "It takes a lot of time to initiate, and then to nurture change . . . But that's the price you pay if you are a change agent."

Important as the superintendent is in directing change, however, he or she cannot do so alone. School boards, central office staff, principals, assistant principals, and teachers must all share leadership responsibilities, each tier providing different abilities and insights that complement one another. Spreading around leadership chores does not diminish the superintendent's ability to guide schools; on the contrary, many of the 16 say, it enhances it.* Working together is a good way to create the trust needed for schools to improve.

## Building Trust

Good superintendents start building trust long before they want to introduce a change. The day they assume their position, they begin convincing teachers, principals, parents, the community, the media, and students to have faith in them and in the schools. If those affected by a change lack trust in the superintendent, reform efforts are unlikely to succeed. Jack Blendinger quickly discovered the importance of establishing trust after becoming the Mapleton, Colorado, superintendent last January. He stepped into a district with a large operating deficit, which many parents and staff members blamed partly on the district's computer expenses. Before Blendinger could proceed with technology improvements, he first had to rebuild trust with Mapleton community members and staff.

Getting to know people helps many superintendents to create the coalitions needed to improve schools. Superintendents from Provo to Oak Ridge to Orangeburg regularly attend Lion's and Rotary Club gatherings. The Montrose superintendent, Robert Cito, buys coffee once a month on a Saturday morning for anyone caring to drop by the local McDonald's for a chat. He publicizes these gatherings in the local newspaper. Galinsky from Paramus believes that "management by walking around" — around district offices, the schools, and the community — has helped him to become better acquainted. The Columbia superintendent drops by schools periodically to visit principals, teachers, and classrooms. "I must get into the buildings to get a sense of what their frustrations are, to learn what they are feeling," Superintendent Russell Thompson explains. Leaders of large districts report that this is often difficult. "I find it harder to create a climate for reform in a district as diverse as Salt Lake," says Superintendent Bennion,

* Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas reported similar findings in his recent publication, *Speaking of Leadership.*

who was superintendent in Provo, with an enrollment of 12,912, before becoming the top person in Salt Lake, which enrolls 24,000. "There's more bureaucracy, less personal contact. It's more of a challenge."

Although the superintendent must establish ties with all constituents, most of the 16 believe that the relationship between the superintendent and principals is particularly important. Bennion describes the hiring of principals as "one of the most important things I do" — that and providing the support they need to do their best work. Furthermore, every staff member must feel that his or her principal has a solid relationship with the superintendent. "If there's a perception of conflict, or of a lack of confidence between the superintendent and the principal, reform in that building is almost doomed," Galinsky of Paramus says.

Developing credibility with minority-group members and with low-income parents is also important, since they often feel the most isolated from the schools. Ten years ago, Thompson recognized the need to improve this level of trust after some of them complained that their children were disciplined more harshly than were white children. To improve the relationship, the school board hired minority liaisons to visit homes of minority parents to discuss any concerns they had about school policies and procedures. Since then, Columbia officials report that the relationship has improved significantly.

Building trust with the media is also beneficial; districts that have not done so are more apt to have school improvement efforts hampered by bad press. Many superintendents suggest providing reporters and editors with as much information as is legally permissible, since saying no to a request for budget figures or a copy of a report may lead them to conclude that the district has something to hide. In short succession, a newspaper in Columbia printed two exposes — the first on the misuse of funds at an area hospital, the second on comparable improprieties at city hall. Following the appearance of both articles, top administrators at both places resigned. Columbia educators grew nervous when a reporter then appeared at school administration headquarters to begin a similar 3-month investigation. Officials at the hospital and city hall fought providing records, which Superintendent Thompson believes was a mistake. School officials compiled the information requested in report form — and didn't flinch when the reporter poured through the superintendent's personal calender to compare entries with his expense statements. (The reporter found no inconsistencies.) "The end result was that [the paper] came out with a front-page story detailing how good the district was," Thompson said. The article would not have been so positive if the reporter had found records in disarray. Nonetheless, Thompson believes the district's openness engendered a good relationship between educators and the newspaper in Columbia.

Personal qualities and professional styles are also inextricably linked to trust; staff members in the 16 districts are drawn to superintendents

they perceive as strong, diplomatic, dependable, personable, decisive, visionary, patient, intelligent, informed, and politically astute, as well as strong managers. Sara Lewis, Assistant Superintendent for the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, explains why she enjoys working for Memphis Superintendent Willie Herenton:

> **He's very positive, very in tune with what's happening around the country. He's an innovator, a risk-taker, a good politician, a charismatic leader. He can touch all segments of the population — blacks, whites, the upper, the middle, and the lower.**

Joanne Bergmann, a school board member in Paramus, has equally good things to say about Galinsky: "He's a good listener. And he's bright enough to know that you don't always think of everything, no matter how smart you are."

Frequent contact and strong personal skills help superintendents to cement good relationships with their staffs and communities. But a solid track record is also needed for trust to develop. The school board and residents in Independence barely raised eyebrows when Superintendent Henley asked the board to close Hanthorn Elementary School at the end of the 1982-83 school year. But Hanthorn was the ninth elementary school to close in recent years, and before shutting down the previous eight, Henley had gone through an arduous process to convince skeptics that the move was financially and educationally sound. "If I'd tried this technique on the first building, I would have been stoned out of town," Henley joked half-heartedly.

Although the superintendent leads the way in establishing trust, ultimately, the task falls on everybody's shoulders. Columbia's Thompson explains: "You have to constantly remind principals, and teachers, that they represent the Columbia Public Schools, and that community trust can be fractured by a single individual doing something wrong."

## Developing Plans For Reform

Trust provides the foundation for better schools. But before schools can improve, their leaders must plan what they want their school district to become. "The problem with many districts is that they do reform piecemeal — there's no comprehensive plan," observes Orangeburg Superintendent James Wilsford. Orderly plans prevent haphazard change and enable the reforms to complement each other.

The superintendent shapes the plan, but he or she does not mold it alone. These 16 superintendents collect ideas from a wealth of sources. They read daily newspapers and education journals. They attend conferences. They talk with educators in other districts sharing similar concerns. And they meet with members of the community and with their own staff. Ideas, in short, flow both ways — from the top down, and from the bottom up.

"I've been in education for 23 years, but when you get a group of educators together, and you get them talking about education, it's astounding what you learn," notes Montrose's Cito. Adds Paramus' Galinksy, "You need to spend a great deal of time with faculty, with parents, listening to their yearnings and aspirations for what's better for kids, and try to put that into a format that makes sense educationally."

The superintendent can also bring together the people needed to plan change; he or she can form committees and study groups to plan new programs and can ask those with special talents and expertises to participate. It is essential to involve those affected by the reform — not only because they have much to contribute, but because their support is needed for the change to endure. "They can't feel used," Montrose Superintendent Cito explains. "You have got to make them feel that their ideas are important — because they are."

In Paramus, all changes go through an influential committee composed of teachers, high school students, parents, and administrators. Anyone in the district can ask this committee to consider a new program or idea. The committee elects its own leadership, and while the superintendent can attend its meetings, he has no vote.

School improvements take longer if more people participate. The Salt Lake superintendent asked all 37 schools to select a representative for a committee that developed a career ladder program for teachers. "It wasn't ideal for decisionmaking," Bennion admitted. But he believes that having a cumbersome committee paid off; teachers themselves developed most of the program, which eventually lent the plan broad support from the group most affected by it.

Many good reforms grow from long-range planning committees, which take stock of the entire district and suggest goals for its future. Last year Oak Ridge released a 98-page strategic plan to guide the schools through 1996. An ad hoc advisory committee, cochaired by Superintendent Robert Smallridge and a school board member, spent from November 1985 to June 1987 developing the comprehensive report. The committee analyzed the district's strengths and weaknesses in areas ranging from student achievement to district finances. It then studied national and local trends that might influence the Oak Ridge schools in the next decade — among them more single-parent families, and more households with both parents working. Building on what it found, the committee created a vision for the district's future and developed a strategy to obtain it. For example, the committee recommended the district study various scheduling patterns, including longer school days or year, and suggested Oak Ridge strengthen the creative and critical thinking and decisionmaking skills of its students. When former Tennessee Governor Alexander asked Oak Ridge to participate in Project Education Reform, the district had little trouble selecting reform areas recommended in *Time for Results* on which to concentrate; the long-range plan provided clear direction.

In most districts, some changes originate not in the superintendents' office or in district-wide committees, but in individual buildings. Arkansas Governor Clinton selected two *schools* instead of two *districts* to participate in Project Education Reform because he believes reform planned within a building to fit its needs is most effective. Springdale High School and Central High School in Little Rock have generated or will generate many of their own school improvement plans. When building educators initiate changes, however, two factors normally must exist for them to succeed: the building-level reforms must not clash with the district's overall mission and goals, and they need the central administration's support.

In their zeal to improve, educators in some of the 16 districts said they rushed into new programs prematurely — and that they paid a price for doing so. Springdale High School launched its School-Within-a-School program before its teachers and administrators had clear plans for how to reach their goal — an alternative school that, among other things, teaches students how to think critically and become actively involved in learning. The program began amid confusion, which some of its teachers believe better planning might have prevented.

## Communicating The Plans

Before the plans can become programs, the people they affect need to know about them. "I see myself as being responsible for bringing about an awareness that there are better ways to do things," says Smallridge from Oak Ridge. Galinksy of Paramus adds, "You will not find a successful leader who isn't scored high on the ability to motivate, convince, communicate, and make understandable a vision of where you want them to go."

If many people helped to develop the blueprint, many of those affected by the change may already know about it. Extra efforts to explain the plans can broaden support for them, however. Norma Osborn, Assistant to the Independence Superintendent, credits the success of the Parents as Teachers program partly to the superintendent's communications skills. "Dr. Henley had a clear idea of where he wanted the program to go. There was never any doubt in my mind what I was to do. He told us to build a program, based on a model from [the educational psychologist and author] Burton White. So we did."

Superintendents, in short, must be salesmen. "You have to be willing to sell your idea to the kids, to the parents, say this will work," notes Melanson from the White Mountains schools. "You can't be negative — you have to believe in what you are selling."

Plans can be sold at faculty and school board meetings, at Chamber of Commerce gatherings, and in private conversations with anyone interested in them. "I'm in many organizations," says Henley. "I know nearly all the leaders in Independence. I spend time with them, go to lunch with them." This pays off when the superintendents wants to promote a new program — even one the community may not fully support —

because, Henley continues, "when we get ready to do something, often people judge the person who is doing it — not the idea itself."

Lecturing on the need for a new program may be unproductive. To gain supporters, Smallridge from Oak Ridge shares articles with his staff and he sees that they attend appropriate conferences. Then they can conclude for themselves that reform is needed. Some superintendents also find it helpful first to convince a handful of influential educators that a change is desirable; they in turn can convince others. And some superintendents use economic arguments to draw followers. Superintendent Wilsford of Orangeburg explains:

> **The whole sense in this town is that our economic survival depends on the educational community moving forward. The black and white power structure knows that the Orangeburg racial balance is shifting to more minorities. It knows that the black people have to become better off if we're going to have a dynamic community — and the schools are the key to that.**

This understanding has enabled Orangeburg educators to gain support for programs geared toward the 75 percent of the district's students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

*When* and *how* the superintendent seeks support for a reform may influence its chances of being accepted. Many superintendents wait until the community's mood seems right before introducing a reform. However, some also introduce a new plan or program before they realistically expect it to be accepted just to plant the idea. "If it doesn't fly the first time," says Henley of Independence, "you don't give up. You just come back again from a different angle."

Many of these 16 superintendents recognize that they are a step ahead of those they lead. So how do they manage to take an untraditional idea and sell it to traditional people? "You explain it so it doesn't sound so untraditional," according to Henley. Some Independence residents and educators initially opposed plans for the district to provide daycare services, although 65 percent of the Independence women with children enrolled in the public schools work outside the home, and many complain that they lack good daycare arrangements. "I explained it by discussing the changes in the American family and why the schools have to provide this service today," Henley said. "It's an unusual idea, but it's what we have to do for today's circumstances." This approach swayed key constituents — principals, teachers, and PTA groups. "By definition, the idea became traditional," Henley said. "If that many people want it, how can it be radical?"

Even the most convincing sales pitch may not gain school administrators all the necessary converts. When this is the case, astute politicking may be needed. Superintendent James Caulfield led the campaign in Union for a $6.9 million bond issue for building renovations and educational equipment. He knew the dollar amount would

displease some voters, particularly senior citizens on fixed incomes. He also knew, however, that few budget items could gain faster support than those related to football because the Union High School team has won many championships. At Caulfield's urging, the bond issue included $140,000 for flood lights for the football field, a move that provided him with a ready cadre of football players and sports fans to conduct the campaign. Despite mixed voter support on past bond issues, Union residents approved this one by a 3 to 2 margin.

Education reformers never finish their need to communicate their ideas for change. A rapid turnover of school board members, community residents, and educators requires the superintendent and his or her staff continually to sell plans to improve the schools. Last fall the superintendent in Provo invited Mossi White, a new school board member, to accompany him to meetings with building principals to discuss goals for the upcoming school year. These meetings introduced White to key building personnel and acquainted her with educational issues — both key to her ability to make intelligent decisions.

## Carrying Out The Plans

Once key constituents understand plans for reform, the ideas must then be executed. Superintendents agree that school improvement efforts are doomed if top-quality people are not available to carry them out. Henley emphasizes that "The key to reform is having good people to implement it — teachers, principals, other people working in the schools." Generally, the better the superintendent, the easier it is for him or her to attract capable and loyal followers. Galinsky adds:

> **The ability to get things done through people — that's the essence of leadership. Unless you unleash the creative talents of people in the system — both the staff and parents — final solutions will never be institutionalized or deep-rooted.**

For staff members to carry out reforms, they may need extra training. In Independence and Columbia, teachers in the program to instruct mothers and fathers on how to become better parents were trained in everything from what parents can expect of their children at certain ages to how to assuage a jealous toddler who has just gained a sibling. And virtually all of the districts that have developed technology programs provided training for students or district personnel needing it.

If training is unable to improve their skills sufficiently, superintendents may need to shuffle personnel. In Henley's first 6 years in Independence, he replaced all but 5 of the district's 19 elementary school principals because the former ones didn't possess the qualities he believed were needed to improve the schools. Gathering the right people to carry out reforms "is like assembling a football team," Henley explains. "You have to get the best person for each position."

Although all superintendents delegate some reform responsibilities, some still remain quite actively involved, particularly those in smaller districts. Even those who delegate all or most of the work, however, say they like to stay informed of its progress — and step in if the improvement effort hits a logjam. Henley explains:

> **Reform ideas often are resisted. So sometimes you have to be authoritarian. You have to say, "Here's what we are going to do," then say, "No, I'm not interested in that amendment." Oh, you might take a little one here, and a little one there. But most people try to add ideas that make it more comfortable to them, and make it less of a change. So I try to keep the idea pure. The superintendent shepherds it through the group, so that when you get the plan built, it's still the same idea you began with.**

Improvements do not always unfurl as their creators anticipated. School officials may need to modify or eliminate some aspects of a program that are not panning out. They may also need to inspect new or proposed programs closely to see why they are not working or cannot get off the ground. Quite often, they discover, a barrier stands in its way.

## Barriers To Reform

Educators often encounter obstacles to reform, ranging from restrictive laws and regulations to inadequate money. John Stolt, Associate Superintendent of Instruction in Columbia, explained at a meeting in April 1988 of Project Education Reform participants:

> **The issue of barriers is pervasive, and I don't think any one of us is going to get away from that. As long as you have large organizations, any time you get money from any resource, there are going to be regulations. But I also think the reason people who are here are here is because those are *not* serious obstacles. They have either circumvented them, or they have neutralized them, or they have proceeded anyhow. So the barriers have been like flies that bother you, but you don't die from them.**

Some districts complain more about barriers than do others, partly because laws, rules, and regulations are more constraining in some States and communities than in others. Educators in New Jersey, which has a long history of tight regulations, cite more hurdles than school officials in New Hampshire, which has no State income tax and a tradition of local control.

A few superintendents feel that little aside from their own inertia discourages reform. "With the kind of reforms we're attempting in Independence," explains Superintendent Henley, "the only barriers are ourselves." Many of these same superintendents believe that what their

colleagues describe as "barriers" are not necessarily bad — that they were put there for a reason. "If it weren't for regulations, we'd have segregated schools and unequal funding for the black kids," Wilsford of Orangeburg says. And regulations for Chapter 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981 were devised to help assure that funds from this Federal program went to those for whom they were intended — disadvantaged children.

But those who see the need for regulations believe there should be limits to them. "I believe in regulations," Superintendent George Cannon of Little Rock explains. "But when the schools can prove themselves effective, then many of them shouldn't be necessary."

Many superintendents also noted that what one educator views as a barrier another may not — teacher unions, teacher certification laws, or State course requirements, for instance. Furthermore, what might be an obstacle in one district may not be in others. A school board that resists reform or doesn't understand the issues surrounding it can greatly hamper school improvement efforts. Henley explains:

> **Fortunately, the Independence School Board has been progressive. But when you have a school board that isn't really "with it," all your time and all your effort is spent running around chasing geese. It's just a complete waste of time, and reform is out of the question. You are just happy to keep the school district going.**

But strong school boards can be an enormous asset — by suggesting needed reform, and by guiding a change through appropriate channels. Good school board members can also help to communicate reform plans to the community.

The following barriers were high on the list of those that draw complaints. A few superintendents admit that sheer frustration has occasionally led them to ignore cumbersome rules or regulations that hamper reform. (Those who admit to doing so are more apt to ignore a local regulation than State or Federal laws because the stakes for doing so are not as high.) More often, however, these superintendents seek ways to get around the barriers.

## Lack Of Time And Competing Priorities

A lack of time and competing priorities hamper reform efforts in many districts. "Just keeping this place running on a day-to-day basis is enough for me," explains Everett Hawks, principal of Central High School in Little Rock, which is involved in far-reaching improvement efforts. "We have so much stuff heaped on us. Our teachers already are overloaded and overworked. They can only do so much." In addition to overseeing the school's reform efforts, Hawks manages the 2,100-student building, a sprawling facility situated in a poor section of Little Rock.

Furthermore, when school officials devote time to reform, they sometimes contend with complaints of being unavailable for other responsibilities. In Timberlane, for example, teacher evaluations now consume up to half of the principals' time, requiring them to delegate the task of communicating with parents to other staff members. Parents have objected, saying they prefer to deal directly with the principal.

Districts complaining about competing priorities seldom have funds to hire more people to carry out the reforms. Then how do improvements materialize? Smallridge from Oak Ridge says that good planning is the key to providing school officials with more time to devote to bettering schools. In Provo, John Childs, principal of Dixon Middle School, provided his staff with sophisticated calendars and time planners, a simple move that has enabled them to work more efficiently. Some school officials accomplish reforms by working longer hours. Most educators reorder priorities. Timberlane principals involved in a new time-consuming program to evaluate teachers have shifted some administrative duties to assistant principals and teachers.

And when the extra stress of administering a new program seems too overwhelming, the superintendents remind themselves of one important point — more time spent now may save time in the long run. It may take tremendous effort to create a new dropout program, but down the road it may drastically cut staff time needed to track down truant students.

## MONEY

Money was also high on virtually every superintendent's list of obstacles. Many of them agree with this assessment from South Carolina Governor Carroll A. Campbell, Jr.:

> **Money is important to educational excellence, but it's not the most important . . . Money can do a lot of things, but it can't inspire. Inspiration in a classroom comes from the heart, not the pocketbook.**

Still, the superintendents recognize that some reforms are costly — such as a program to provide computers for students or teachers, for example, or one that provides more money for teachers who assume more responsibilities. Economic restrictions have forced many of the 16 school systems to scale down improvements, or delay them until money becomes available. Montrose enrolled just half the students it would like to in a summer school program for at-risk youngsters because the district lacked funds.

Union and Paramus educators complain of additional financial pressures stemming from a need to gain voter approval for their annual budgets. In Union, the electorate has turned down the district's budget 2 of the last 5 years, giving the mayor and city council the power to make cuts, and delaying approval of a final budget until long after educational plans should be in place for the following school year.

Since the 16 districts involved in Project Education Reform received no extra money for their participation, how have they paid for improvements? Most money has come from their three standard sources — Federal, State, and local tax money. Some districts cut another program or shifted financial priorities to carry out reforms. Some districts applied for special grants. The White Mountains schools received an $81,000 grant from the Governor's Initiative for Excellence in Education to buy computers for their teachers, supplementing that amount with its own funds. A few districts have turned to the business community. Staff members occasionally dig into their own pockets. "I am motivated to teach and have so many ideas for my children," notes Claudean Clariette, who teaches at-risk 6-year-olds at Klondike Elementary School in inner-city Memphis. "I just wish I had the funds, materials, and time to do these things." One morning following a winter storm in Memphis, Clariette helped her students construct snowmen using marshmallows, food coloring, and toothpicks — which she bought herself. For children who need clothing, she has brought in everything from underwear to overcoats.

Most local educators constantly look for creative ways to work with their limited resources. Principal Karen Buchanan at Woodruff Elementary School in Little Rock faces special challenges. Seventy-four percent of her students come from low-income families, and last year court-ordered desegregation led to massive districtwide staff and student reassignments; she began the 1987-88 school year with 14 teachers (out of 17) new to Woodruff. But Buchanan has made her school a cheerful place for teachers to do their best work and for children to learn. To enrich the school's academic program, Woodruff joined in a partnership with nearby Central High School, whose students and teachers provide everything from peer tutoring to advice on how to teach Latin to the entire Woodruff student body. She also spearheaded efforts to physically enliven the 77-year-old school. Student artwork of everything from leprechauns to snowflakes adorns the building's walls, and last April, students painted a giant dinosaur on the school's drab parking lot. As spring rains arrived, Buchanan explained, "We watched the dinosaur become extinct."

Holmes credits Timberlane's large budget and teacher salary increases this year to the line of argument district officials have used with the school board:

> **We've tried to convince our board members that they are going to pay the money anyway — either in the long run or the short run. We've told them that it's going to cost more if we don't reform the schools.**

## State Laws And Regulations

State laws and regulations create troubles in virtually all of the 16 districts.

- *Teacher certification requirements*, for example, can make it hard for administrators to hire the people they would like to. Memphis Superintendent Herenton reports that certification is a greater barrier in recent years as the number of highly qualified teaching applicants has dropped. "We have no trouble finding (applicants) who have mastered the content," Herenton notes. "But many of them don't have all the required methods courses." Springdale is concerned about finding instructors appropriately certified to teach in its School-Within-a-School, an interdisciplinary program where one person might be needed to teach history and philosophy, or math and science. In many places, State funds cannot be used to pay teachers lacking the appropriate credentials, and teachers' unions vehemently oppose hiring instructors without them.

Several States, including New Jersey, use "alternative certification" to attract new teachers who know their subject area but lack teacher education coursework. Alternative certification programs offer shortcuts and special training to noncertified individuals with at least a bachelor's degree who wish to teach. In 1987, New Jersey's alternative route program supplied 244 new teachers, or 15 percent of the State's new teachers, including 2 in Paramus. Superintendent Galinsky testified in favor of the New Jersey program, which the New Jersey Education Association initially opposed, and he worked with the commissioner of education to implement it. The State's alternative certification candidates have scored higher on the National Teachers Examination than candidates in more traditional training programs.

- State *bilingual education laws* have been an obstacle in Paramus, where students speak 49 languages. State law requires every New Jersey school district to provide bilingual instruction as soon as it enrolls 20 or more students in grades K-12 who speak a particular foreign language. Galinsky says this law presents the district with logistical problems, since student mobility constantly changes the number of students enrolled who speak any one language. On a Monday, just 19 students may speak Korean; on Tuesday, the arrival of a new family may boost that number to 22, requiring the hiring of a new bilingual teacher. Furthermore, Galinsky believes that some non-English-speaking students progress better in "English as a Second Language" (ESL) programs, which instruct these students solely in English, than they do in bilingual programs.

To overcome this barrier, Galinsky drafted new legislation that would provide districts with the option of providing either bilingual or ESL programs to students, and he has gained support from many education groups for this change. The bill is staunchly opposed by the leadership of some Hispanic organizations, who believe many school districts would eliminate bilingual programs, which they favor to educate their

children. The New Jersey legislature is expected to vote on the bill this fall.

■ State *vocational education laws* have been cumbersome for Caulfield from Union. New Jersey law requires districts to provide a set package of vocational classes if the district wants to receive State money to fund any of them. This means that a district with virtually no students interested in architectural design may have to provide the class anyway in order to get money for programs in dental technology or computers that draw many students. Caulfield believes vocational classes in Union have helped to told down the district's dropout rate. However, he did not find a sympathetic ear when he sought permission from the State's Panel on Secondary Vocational Education to receive money for whatever classes the district provides. This was largely because panel members believe that Union students could just as easily enroll in classes at a nearby county vocational facility. The State Department of Education has indicated that districts might be given more flexibility in the future to use the money as they see fit, although this would first require a change in State law.

■ State *course requirements* bar reform, according to some educators. All the superintendents want their students to master basic academic skills, and some educators in these 16 districts believe that strict course requirements are crucial to their doing so. But others believe that the districts should be able to decide for themselves how to transmit the knowledge that their students need. Union, for example, has a thriving junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program, which Caulfield believes is much better at teaching geography to those enrolled than a more traditional geography program would be. He notes:

> **The ROTC kids would never sit still for a geography lesson on latitude and longitude, but if you provide them with a map-reading course, and then they go to Fort Dix and lose their way in swamps and have to find their way out, they will learn all the geography we could ever want.**

■ State laws controlling *school facilities* have been an obstacle in Union and Paramus. Educators in both districts developed preschool classes to aid students lagging behind their peers socially and academically. New Jersey requires each classroom with kindergartners or younger students to contain its own bathroom — a measure intended to prevent small children from roaming the hallways unescorted. Paramus had five empty classrooms to accommodate the preschool children, none of which contained its own toilet. However, teachers' aides were available to accompany the youngsters to hallway bathrooms a few feet outside the classrooms. Because installing one toilet costs $20,000, Galinsky appealed for a waiver to the State commissioner's office which, although sympathetic, did not approve his request, requiring Galinsky to ask the Paramus School Board for an additional $100,000. The district now has five classrooms with tiny toilets

scaled to accommodate their users, all unnecessary if the classrooms are ever needed for older students.

## Federal Laws And Regulations

Educators in the 16 districts complain that Federal laws and regulations are even harder to combat than State and local ones. Local educators say their frustrations are greater with the Federal laws and regulations because they seem less flexible, and because the educators do not understand possible ways to circumvent them.

- Educators complain about the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142)*, which aims to guarantee handicapped children with equal educational opportunities. No one disputes this goal. But they dislike the enormous amount of paperwork the law engenders, and the time they must spend developing individualized educational programs for each youngster diagnosed as handicapped. The hours they spend filling out forms and developing the plans takes time away from other aspects of their work, including school improvement efforts.

- Local school officials complain that *Chapter 1* regulations are inflexible. For instance, educators in several districts have used Chapter 1 money to buy computers for children needing to improve their basic skills, but the computers sit idle when Chapter 1 students are not available to use them. Some superintendents suggest the Federal regulations be modified to allow non-Chapter 1 students to use the unoccupied computers — with the clear understanding that the Chapter 1 students be given the first priority.

Galinsky from Paramus has encountered problems in seeking Chapter 1 money to expand its preschool program to include at-risk 3-year-olds. New Jersey favored using some Chapter 1 money to allow Paramus to establish a model program for at-risk 3-year-olds. Because some urban areas in New Jersey serve more low-income students than Paramus, the New Jersey Department of Education urged Galinsky to seek a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education. He was unsuccessful, however, because the present law does not permit such waivers, and an act of Congress would be required in order to grant him one. So thus far, Paramus has been unable to expand its program.

## Tests

While most superintendents complain about Federal and State regulations, many also believe that tests stifle reform. All 16 districts rely on national standardized tests, often supplementing them with State- and locally developed ones, to gauge the academic progress of their students. Moreover, most believe that tests are the best gauge available to measure student achievement. However, many of these educators complain that the public and policymakers rely too heavily on tests to evaluate reform efforts, and they criticize some for failing to measure

what district educators want their children to learn. Furthermore, this reliance on tests encourages some teachers to teach to the tests.

Educators in urban districts with many low-income students also resent the tests being used to compare them with districts educating more prosperous students. Lewis from Memphis explains, "We get compared with Oak Ridge, where the average kid comes from a home where many parents have 4 years of college, and we have to deal with kids whose folks can't even spell college." Some States and local districts circumvent this problem by providing information to compare districts and schools whose students have similar economic backgrounds.

Some educators believe the large number of tests they are required to administer drains finances and staff time. Memphis, for instance, gives the California Achievement Test each fall and spring to students at all grade levels; the Stanford Achievement Test each fall and spring to students in grades 2, 5, 7, 9, and 12; and the Basic Skills Benchmark Test in the spring only to children in grades 3, 6, and 8. In addition, all 9th graders wanting to graduate from high school must take the Tennessee Proficiency Test, and students moving from kindergarten to the 1st grade also take a special test. The State mandates many of these tests, but Lewis observes, "It's just too much. After awhile, the kids don't take the tests seriously. They say, 'If this doesn't count on my grade, then forget it. I'll just doodle on the paper.'"

## Teachers' Unions

Teachers' unions are viewed as hindrances in some districts. Cito from Montrose views tenure laws supported by union members as an obstacle to guaranteeing consistently well-qualified teachers. Galinsky from Paramus describes the New Jersey Education Association as "the most powerful lobby in the State," and he says that any major reform proposal lacking its support may be doomed. Furthermore, he notes, local education organizations that try to move away from the policies and practices of the State and national teachers' organizations are usually pressured to toe the line.

The key to overcoming problems with the unions lies in involving them in reform efforts, according to educators in these 16 districts. Principal Hawks discovered this in planning for reform at Little Rock's Central High School:

> **Whenever we have an issue that is going to butt up against the union position, we call in the union leadership. We tell them that in this building we are going to need some leeway on things like work hours. We tell them there is basic stuff in the contract that is killing us, quite honestly, and that we're going to have to deal with it. Then we form a committee. We've found that if we're going to have any success at all, we must include them in solutions.**

## SIZE

Large districts cite size as an impediment. Henley considers the 11,216-student Independence school system to be close to ideal. He explains:

> **In a district the size of Independence, you don't have to spend all of your time running the school system, and you have more time to spend on reform, more time to do your homework, to get out and sell your idea to the people who need to be sold on it. If you get too big, the weight of the organization drags you down.**

Educators in Memphis, with 107,000 students, agree. Lewis explains:

> **We had one visitor who told us he could come into Memphis and straighten out all the problems in about 6 weeks, and I said, "Sir, it will take you longer than that to find all the (158) school buildings."**

The challenge to improve schools in large districts is compounded by the fact that systems like Memphis or Little Rock tend to have more students at risk for academic failure, and more special education students. Some educators believe that the size barrier can be overcome by restructuring schools — for example, by leaving more educational and managerial decisions up to educators in individual buildings.

## NEGATIVE COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

Negative community attitudes toward reform work against some school improvement efforts. Community support is essential for major changes — particularly costly ones. This becomes harder to obtain, however, as the percentage of households with children enrolled in the public schools dwindles. The shift in Paramus is similar to what one finds in many districts; 30 years ago, about 75 percent of the households had school-aged children; today, only about 13 percent do. This change has required local educators to lobby harder for public support.

A broader diversity of students has also increased the challenge of getting community support. Some educators complain that the growth in poor students has been accompanied by an increase in parents who don't always understand the value of an education in a democratic society. These parents spend more time worrying about paying rent and buying groceries than they do their children's schooling. Cito from Montrose explains:

> **There is a tremendous undercurrent in a lot of places in our country of giving up — that this is what life is going to be, and that it's not going to get any better. Some of the parents figure that what was good enough for them is good enough for their kids.**

This attitude has created a gap in the expectations of some parents and educators, according to Cito. His solution to this obstacle is as follows:

**Schools must teach children that there's a world out there. Through the curriculum, through field trips, you get children to see the options — you let them know that there is something besides the immediate reward they get from having a car or a $2-an-hour job flipping hamburgers.**

## Negative Staff Attitudes

Negative staff attitudes are equally hard for superintendents in some districts to counteract. School officials often have a hard time breaking away from tired approaches to try something new. Springdale Superintendent Jim Rollins explains:

**One of the great barriers is that we are products of a very traditionally oriented system, and it's hard for us to shake out of the mold and challenge ourselves to look at some things differently. We say we are committed to something new, but there's a growth process needed to become comfortable with it. So it takes a little time, and a willingness on the part of the board, the superintendent, the principal, and the teachers to push back the blinds and say, "Hey, this is a possibility. We really need to give this a chance. We're willing to take some risks here to put this in place."**

Little Rock educators involved in school improvement efforts at Central High School have fought staff opposition to providing any one school with special favors. If Central is to benefit from being paired with a nearby elementary school, for example, some staff members at other schools want their buildings to be offered a similar arrangement.

Barriers related to negative staff or community attitudes are best fought with a barrage of information presented in an easily understandable way. Superintendent Melanson believes thorough training helped the computers-for-teachers program get off the ground in the White Mountains schools. To fire up reluctant teachers, he said:

**We had them take their Apple IIe computer out of the box, put it on the desk, and set it up. Then we had them take a screwdriver and a pair of pliers, take the cover off, strip the computer down, and put the chips back in. They found out that the computer is nothing but a dumb box with a bunch of bells and whistles — that it's nothing to be afraid of. If you press the wrong button, it's not going to blow up, and you won't either.**

## Inadequate Facilities

Inadequate facilities are a hindrance in some districts.

Montrose officials provided 24 computers for Olathe High School to use in business education classes. After the computers arrived, however, school officials learned that the electrical system in the 55-year-old building was inadequate to drive them. If students use the computers at the same time electric typewriters or a copying machine are running, a fuse blows, knocking out the electricity in 8 of the school's 20 classrooms. District educators are working toward a solution.

Overcrowding presents problems in some districts. Whitehaven Elementary School in Memphis has a 500-student capacity but enrolls 900 students. Each classroom contains the maximum number of students allowed by State law, and a Chapter 1 program that teaches up to six students at a time is housed in a tiny 8- by 10-foot area partitioned off of the library. The rest of the overflow is housed in four portable classrooms.

## Lack Of Leadership Continuity

A lack of leadership continuity has slowed reform in some of the 16 districts. Governors in three of the eight States involved in Project Education Reform have changed since the project began, and many of the districts in those States complain that the new governors either don't appear as interested in supporting their reform efforts, or that reform efforts inevitably slowed while the new governors took time to acclimate. Furthermore, 2 of the 16 superintendents have changed. Galinksy of Paramus raises this question:

> **How do you keep the same level of commitment to an activity when boards of education change, when the people who owned it are gone, when a new superintendent comes into the district who doesn't identify with the priorities that someone else established, and needs his or her own agenda to live by?**

Of the nine board members present when Galinsky became superintendent 3 years ago, just two remain.

A key to alleviating this barrier lies in establishing broad support for a new program as rapidly as possible, lessening the loss if one person leaves. Springdale teachers believe that the School-Within-a-School program initially was too closely identified with the high school's former principal. When he left halfway through the program's first year, some Springdale educators and parents felt that support for it dwindled, requiring the district to exert extra effort to regain community trust.

## THE PARTNERSHIP

Working separately, Federal officials, governors, and local educators have all tried to improve American schools. But seldom have the three levels of policymakers collaborated to bring about reform.

Project Education Reform was conceived both as a way to establish educational laboratories for reform and as an experiment to solve educational problems collectively. How well has the partnership worked?

Have educators in the 16 districts and their students benefited from the partnership? Have the governors and U.S. Department of Education officials been able to help local districts remove barriers that impede reform? In return, have the local districts improved educational services and achievement?

After 2 years, all three partners still believe this joint venture is a sound idea and look forward to continuing the collaboration. However, the 16 districts' experiences with the partnership have been uneven. For example:

- Some local educators praise the partnership for bringing them media attention. A television network visited Union to film a feature on school improvement shortly after the New Jersey district was selected as 1 of the 16 districts, and last May Newsweek magazine ran a cover story on reform efforts in Orangeburg. Other districts, however, say media interest has been negligible, and suggested that the U.S. Department of Education and their governors' offices help showcase their efforts so that other districts can learn about their experiences. More visits from the U.S. Secretary of Education (who has already travelled to 5 of the 16 districts) or from the governors might also draw them attention, they advised. Some also suggested that the National Governors' Association do more to publicize the project.

- Some local school officials say the partnership has accelerated their reform efforts; Oak Ridge educators, for example, noted that they would not have purchased computers for use in typing classes as soon as they did if the district had not been selected as 1 of the 16 participants. Educators in other districts, however, said that with or without the partnership, they probably would implement the same new programs on about the same schedule.

- Some educators, particularly those in the smaller districts, say the partnership has been a good staff morale-booster. Others, including Memphis, note that their district is so large that most of the staff do not even know that Project Education Reform exists.

- Educators in some districts admit to being less committed to the partnership than are others. Those with a limited commitment say this stems in part from their not receiving additional money to participate. Without a financial incentive, educators are inclined to place priorities elsewhere, they said.

■ Some local educators praise the attention they have received from their governors. Little Rock educators say that a meeting that Arkansas Governor Clinton called with them and State department of education officials to discuss reform efforts at Central High School helped to spur them into further action. And superintendents in New Hampshire said Governor John Sununu's office has responded rapidly to their requests. School officials in some of the 16 districts, however (particularly those in States where the governors have changed since Project Education Reform began), complain of feeling ignored.

Some districts have yet to approach their governors for help. Nor have some made significant use of outside resources. (The U.S. Department of Education provided the 16 districts with a list of national experts who can provide suggestions for their programs, and has encouraged the local educators to contact education regional laboratories funded by the Federal government for further guidance.) A long-standing tradition of self-sufficiency appears to hold them back. Cito of Montrose explains:

> **You are looking at 16 superintendents who have always operated on their own. They are willing to share, and they are willing to work with each other and with the governors and the U.S. Department of Education, but on a day-to-day basis, they are going to get the job done, and they are going to use the resources they are most used to using.**

Some of those districts that have gone to their governors for help, however, report that their State leaders have been unable to bring down barriers to reform. Most say the governors (and State department of education officials) have tried to cooperate when asked to do so. But some superintendents believe the governors were naive in assuming they possessed the power to overcome the hurdles, particularly those involving Federal rules and regulations. "The governors found out that it's a lot more complex a process to remove barriers than they originally anticipated," said Galinsky of Paramus.

The local districts generally give the U.S. Department of Education kudos for its role in the partnership, particularly the Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs, headed by Peter Greer (formerly the superintendent in Portland, Maine). Local educators said they benefited from several meetings, to which representatives from the 16 districts and the governors' offices were invited, that enabled participants to discuss their programs and problems and gather ideas to resolve them. Local educators laud these meetings for exposing them to the thinking of their colleagues, the National Governors' Association, and to key staff people at the U.S. Department of Education.

Local educators cite one major area in which they now need help from governors' offices and the U.S. Department of Education — evaluation. Some local educators feel incapable of devising ways to judge their own

programs and furthermore believe that any such attempt would be self-serving. Without external help, these educators say they would never fully understand how well these new programs could serve their children.

The superintendent in one district urges the governors and the U.S. Department of Education to goad the 16 districts more often in order to speed along reforms. Herenton of Memphis explains:

> **When you run a dynamic urban system like Memphis, and you have so many pressures being exerted on you — a funding crisis, a stabbing, controversy over an AIDS curriculum — your priorities shift (away from reform). To keep the reform measures in the forefront, someone's got to keep prodding the districts to stay on task.**

## RESULTS

Recent reports on education reform often list steps that lead to better schools and higher student achievement; they recommend, for example, that special programs be created and that certain courses be required. These reports focus on *process*. Unfortunately, the reports have focused less on what matters the most — *results*.

For schools to improve, many educators believe that these priorities must be reordered. When Project Education Reform began 2 years ago, Governor Kean of New Jersey explained:

> **We don't care half so much about particular programs as we do about the results. We want to encourage an attitude that sets high standards and then gives people close to the job the freedom to pick the best methods to achieve those targets.**

This challenge has been among the greatest of any faced by educators in these 16 districts, for the following reasons:

- Despite ongoing debate since A *Nation at Risk* launched the school reform movement in 1983, educators and policymakers have yet to agree on standards by which to measure excellence. Some say this discourages them from undertaking full-scale evaluations; they argue that if nobody can decide what the indicators of success should be, then evaluations aren't meaningful.

- Evaluations can be expensive and time-consuming. The White Mountains schools, with 1,566 students, consulted a University of New Hampshire professor about evaluating the district's computers-for-teachers program because they felt they lacked the internal expertise. District officials didn't pursue the possibility of seeking local tax funds when they heard the price tag — $16,000. Many innovative programs in the 16 districts have not operated long enough to evaluate. For example, Memphis would have to conduct a longitudinal study of its stu-

dents enrolled in a new preschool program to tell if those enrolled do better than those who are not.

- Many new programs do not easily lend themselves to objective evaluations. A program to hold at-risk teenagers in school is relatively easy to judge; school officials can determine what the dropout rate was when the program began and what it is at a later time. (It is more complicated to determine what aspects of the program caused the rate to decline.) A program to evaluate the effectiveness of principals, however, is harder to judge. How, for example, can one evaluate integrity? Or an ability to manage conflict?

In short, some educators in these 16 districts consider themselves neophytes at measuring results. They continue to rely heavily on standardized test scores — and they expect to continue doing so, since the scores provide a measure that both educators and the public understands. Furthermore, they believe that well-developed tests that measure what educators want children to know can be extraordinarily helpful.

But many officials in these 16 districts also believe that policymakers and the public are too quick to rely solely on test scores, and that all too often they fail to recognize their limitations. Lewis from Memphis explains, "If we could only get people to understand that effects of education are not as measurable as LeBarons coming off the Chrysler assembly line." Many educators in these local districts agree that educators and policymakers together must pursue additional ways to evaluate programs.

Despite these difficulties with evaluations, some of the 16 districts have completed good ones. (Significantly, many of the best were conducted by a person or organization not employed by the school district and were paid for with grants or other nondistrict funds.) Among them:

- Provo obtained a grant for an outside research institute to evaluate its year-round schools. Utah's finances are on a collision course with its demographics, forcing State officials to find more efficient ways to house students and making such an evaluation particularly timely: The student population is growing faster than in any other State in the Nation, while per pupil expenditures are 50th and per capita income is 47th out of 50 States.

The institute surveyed about 300 families with children enrolled in Provo's year-round schools, as well as virtually all of the teachers in two of the district's three year-round schools. Evaluators learned that about 73 percent of the parents liked the school schedule, 20 percent were lukewarm, and about 7 percent disliked it. Evaluators also learned that the year-round schedule created childcare problems for some parents. Furthermore, although this was not a major problem, the schools prevented some students from participating in summer recreational programs with friends enrolled in schools with traditional vacations. (To alleviate this problem, the district has developed interses-

sion activities for youngsters enrolled in the year-round schools.) With regard to academic achievement, youngsters enrolled in the year-round schools appear to do as well or slightly better than their peers in schools with traditional schedules.

■ Salt Lake City conducted an internal study of its 1987 summer school program for at-risk students. The program enrolled 540 youngsters at 5 schools, and classes were taught by "career ladder" teachers who received extra pay for their 30 extra half-days of work. The evaluation concluded that the students made good academic gains, that their attendance was fairly high, and that they generally had more positive attitudes towards school at the end of the summer school session than they did at the beginning. Teachers surveyed felt the inservice training they received ahead of time was helpful (although they suggested some areas where the training needing revision), and the summer school was found to have operated within its budget. Salt Lake educators now plan to follow the summer school enrollees to see if they sustain their gains.

Evaluations of specific programs like the ones in Provo and Salt Lake are the exception rather than the rule. Educators in the 16 districts are more inclined to judge results by looking at overall district trends.

Orangeburg, for example, carefully tracks student test scores. The percentage of 4th-grade students receiving a composite score above the 50th national percentile on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills zoomed from 14 percent to 58 percent between 1975 and 1988. Other scores have risen similarly. And the yearly dropout rate for Orangeburg students plummeted from 8.6 percent in 1984 to 2.5 percent in 1987; all but seven of the 1987 seniors graduated. Superintendent Wilsford cannot point to any one program or innovation as the cause of these improvements, but he assumes they reflect a combination of factors:

- A no-nonsense high school principal, who patrols the hallways of the 2,100-student high school with a walkie-talkie;
- Boosted staff morale stemming partly from the improved test scores and from the State and Federal awards the district has received in the past few years;
- Computerized records that have helped school officials track absentee students;
- Increased parental involvement (high school teachers must meet or talk with at least four parents a month);
- An enormous district investment in computers, which provide remedial instruction to academically needy students;
- School and business partnerships; and
- Closer monitoring of the faculty.

Finally, when a visitor asks to be shown indications in some districts that school improvement efforts are succeeding, he or she is guided not to a research and development office to discuss evaluations or test score results, but into classrooms to observe and talk with students. Mapleton enrolls 120 at its alternative school for youngsters who have dropped out or are failing in a traditional program. District educators believe all would drop out from a regular school setting, but here a large number earn a regular diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. Those enrolled include 19-year-old Joe Torrez, who took time out from a mathematics assignment he was completing on a computer to explain, "I was falling behind [at nearby Thornton High School]. I couldn't get in the groove. I was going to quit." He likes the alternative program because here he can work at his own pace and maintain the flexible schedule he needs to work part time. He was scheduled to graduate this spring.

## CONCLUSION

The 16 districts involved in Project Education Reform have not yet achieved all that they would like. Some of their plans to improve schools have barely begun. "We're poised — but what's needed now is strong follow-through," Lewis of Memphis explains. Some have encountered roadblocks on the highway to reform that they have yet to surmount. Quantitative evaluations of their reform efforts are few.

But these districts inspire hope among people who fret about American education. Galinsky from Paramus is optimistic: "When this project is assessed, I think the governors and [U.S.] Secretary of Education Bennett will be able to point to the 16 districts and say, 'Here are places where things *did* happen.'" Capable and dedicated educators are on payrolls in each of the 16 — educators who are starting to take the risks needed to improve American schools. "There's a tremendous pressure for status quo — and we must continue to find ways to break through that, because it's not going to get us where we need to be in the future," explains Cito of Montrose.

These educators express one great concern — that education reform will lose its allure, that the public and policymakers will turn their attention to other issues before real change has time to occur. Galinsky notes:

> **The governors need to keep education on the front burner — it cannot be an election-year-only agenda item. When the importance of education and educational reform is no longer the highest priority, I'd predict that a lot of these efforts will dry up.**

Some of the governors have committed themselves to doing just that. Utah Governor Norman Bangerter explains:

> **Education practices of the past have served us well, but the days of the little red schoolhouse are gone. The 5 years since the issuing of *A Nation at Risk* have produced many changes for education in Utah. It has *not* been "business as usual" in the schools. In spite of all the changes that have occurred, it is imperative that the momentum for reform continue, as there is yet much to be done. I am confident that the pioneering spirit that has propelled this country to greatness for the past two centuries will prevail and we will see a restructuring of schools to fit our students for the 21st century.**

This is the challenge during the current wave of education reform — to remain focused on our Nation's children, to learn from the experiences of these 16 and other districts committed to better schools, and to push toward new frontiers.

# PART 2

## PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE AMERICAN SCHOOLS

### VISITS TO 16 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The 16 districts participating in Project Education Reform have developed a vast array of programs that fit 13 recommendations from *Time for Results* to improve the Nation's schools. The triumphs and troubles each district encountered while doing so are described in this section. Some of the programs break more new ground than others, partly because what one district considers innovative may be long-established practice in another. Most of the programs were designed to meet the singular needs of each school system; therefore, a program that succeeds in Orangeburg, South Carolina, may be unsuitable for Provo, Utah. But however great the districts' differences, their leaders still believe that their reform efforts have taught them much that can benefit anyone eager to provide American youngsters with top-quality schools.

Good schools — and innovative educational programs — do not develop quickly; the best ones evolve over months and years. The following descriptions reflect what a U.S. Department of Education analyst and writer discovered in these districts between December 1987 and March 1988. "Come back again in 1991 — during the final year of Project Education Reform," one superintendent urged the visitor. "We'll have lots going on that we haven't even started. Our programs will be greatly improved."

### ARKANSAS

Arkansas is the one State among the eight participating in Project Education Reform whose stories of reform involve two *schools* instead of two *districts*. Governor Bill Clinton explains why:

> **We want schools in which curiosity and imagination are valued, where intellectual risk-taking is encouraged, where school personnel at all levels work as a team toward one goal. While working on the leadership section of the National Governors' Association's *Time for Results* report, I developed a strong belief that school-based management can accomplish those goals by developing leaders from within the schools and classrooms, where learning actually takes place. That is why Arkansas chose schools, rather than school districts, for the model schools project.**

## LITTLE ROCK

| | |
|---|---|
| *LOCATION:* | Central Arkansas |
| *TYPE OF DISTRICT:* | Urban |
| *STUDENT ENROLLMENT:* | 27,000 |
| *RACIAL MIX:* | 70 percent black, 30 percent white |
| *STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE- AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH:* | 43 percent |
| *REFORM AREA:* | School-based management |

In 1958, Central High School symbolized all that was wrong with American education. That year the school made international newspaper headlines when Governor Orval Faubus tried to defy the U.S. Supreme Court's order to integrate the Little Rock public schools by ordering the Arkansas National Guard to bar the entry of nine black students to Central. When riots ensued, the district closed for the remainder of the 1958-59 school year.

Today, enrollment at Central is 59 percent black, and the school, which stands in an inner city Little Rock neighborhood, is thought by many to be a model of race relations. It offers a choice of 130 courses, including five modern and classical foreign languages. During the past 7 years, it has produced about 10 percent of Arkansas' National Merit Semifinalists, and it sends its graduates to many of the Nation's most competitive colleges and universities.

Central High School is now attempting further strides. During the 1987-88 school year, it took steps to improve its curriculum. Teachers developed several new courses, including ones in physical geology, an American Studies seminar, and a Writing for Success program. It includes everything in the regular English class, but it also teaches students the connection between reading and writing by (among other things) having them keep journals, conduct research for writing projects, and edit each other's copy. Central also formed a partnership with Woodruff Elementary School, a nearby inner-city elementary school, enabling Central staff members to teach science classes at Woodruff and to teach the elementary school's 4th through 6th grade teachers enough Latin so they in turn can instruct their students. Next year, after transportation problems have been ironed out, Central students will become mentors and tutors to Woodruff students. The two student councils also plan to work together on some projects, and Central's journalism department will help Woodruff students produce the school newspaper.

During the 1988-89 school year, school officials expect more far-reaching reforms. Principal Everett Hawks has formed a committee of teachers and staff members to develop what Little Rock School Board Member Skip Rutherford describes as "the definitive model of site-based management for Arkansas" — one that will enable principals and

their staffs to make more decisions about management and education in their schools. Central staff members delayed such changes this past year because of upheaval resulting from a teachers' strike, the appointment of a new superintendent, and a court desegregation order that prompted massive staff and student reassignments throughout the district. Although the committee has yet to work out details, Rutherford and Hawks have ideas for what the model might include:

- Ways for teachers to be more involved in decisions that affect them;
- Teachers serving as mentors for students;
- An evaluation system in which students evaluate teachers and the principal, and everyone evaluates him- or herself;
- Plans to reduce the dropout rate (which remains troublingly high, particularly among black students); and
- Plans to create more of a community atmosphere (for example, by having teachers become more involved in nonacademic activities or creating one big lunch period, at the final portion of which special instructional or entertainment programs could be scheduled).

The greatest challenge facing Hawks is to get staff support for the reforms, some of which veer from provisions in the teachers' contract. Efforts got off to a shaky start last year when the district's administration rejected a proposed list of changes that a committee of Central teachers favored. Some staff members now say this dampened their enthusiasm for reform. (Rutherford said the suggestions were turned down not so much because the district administration opposed them, but because with so much district-wide upheaval "their boats were loaded" and they were unprepared to handle any more change.)

Despite this setback, considerable support from the superintendent on down the hierarchy can be found for school-based management in Little Rock. Superintendent George Cannon believes that school-by-school decisionmaking is particularly important in a fairly large district like Little Rock, whose schools have such varying needs. But in exchange for granting principals and their staffs more authority to guide their own destinies, he says, they must then be held accountable for what

their students achieve. Cannon suggests several ways to gauge success: test scores, the dropout and attendance rates, and student participation in activities. As Central's school-based planning progresses, he says, the district administration will keep tabs on these indicators.

*CONTACT:* George Cannon
Superintendent
810 West Markham Street
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201
(501) 374-3361

Everett Hawks
Principal
Central High School
14th and Park Streets
Little Rock, Arkansas 72202
(501) 376-4751

## SPRINGDALE

| | |
|---|---|
| *LOCATION:* | Northwest Arkansas |
| *TYPE OF DISTRICT:* | Small city/rural |
| *STUDENT ENROLLMENT:* | 7,366 |
| *RACIAL MIX:* | 99.5 percent white |
| *STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE- AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH:* | 20 percent |
| *REFORM AREA:* | Redesigning the schools |

A sign on a bulletin board in one of Springdale's School-Within-a-School classrooms reads, "S.W.S. — Making the Connections."

Another nearby lists "The Basics of Tomorrow":

- Evaluation and analysis skills;
- Critical thinking;
- Synthesis;
- Organization and reference skills;
- Problem-solving strategies;
- Decisionmaking;
- Application;
- Creativity; and
- Communication skills through a variety of modes.



47

Welcome to one of four classrooms within Springdale High School, where instructors are using new methods to teach these things to the 55 students enrolled.

During the spring of 1985, the former principal at Springdale High School attended a seminar at which educator and author Theodore Sizer discussed problems outlined in his book, *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School.* Springdale High School appeared to suffer from similar problems, which ranged from tracking students in homogeneous groups to developing students who passively move through their school days with unengaged minds. So soon after the seminar, school officials sought permission to proceed with an experimental program. The district applied for and received a 3-year matching grant from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation to help defray costs, and the School-Within-a-School opened its doors at the start of the 1986-87 school year.

In structuring the program, the former principal and teachers were guided by many of Sizer's tenets: for example, that teaching and learning should be personalized, and that teachers should be "coaches" and students "workers," enabling the latter to learn how to learn. The school's philosophy is that it is less important to move superficially through a 500-page biology book than it is to thoroughly understand a part of it — and the process of learning science.

Students take four interdisciplinary classes — Inquiry and Expression, Literature and the Fine Arts, History and Philosophy, and Science. They also enroll in math and electives within the regular curriculum. The School-Within-a-School teachers meet daily to plan joint lessons and discuss mutual concerns. To begin the 1987-88 year, students studied the theme "Choices and Consequences" in all of their School-Within-a-School classes. For example, in the science class, the teacher covered such issues as the source of foods and their nutritional values. The history and philosophy class drew on examples from economics and world history to help students understand the economic and cultural consequences of decisions regarding foods.

The School-Within-a-School is a major shift from traditional education; not surprisingly, it has encountered some difficulties. Sizer suggested basic tenets to follow, but left it to local districts to decide for themselves how to implement them. Consequently, the four teachers in Springdale struggled a bit when the program began — and now admit that they would encourage the administration to delay starting the program if they had it to do over so that plans could first be more firmly cemented. The program also suffered a setback when the principal left halfway through the first year; he was replaced by an interim principal, who in turn was replaced by a permanent principal, Harry Wilson, in September 1987. Initially, the program enrolled about 80 students, some drawn less by a belief in the School-Within-a-School philosophy than by a dislike of the regular school. Most of those who did not support School-Within-a-School goals eventually left the

program, reducing enrollment to 55. School officials would prefer a larger enrollment and hope next school year to return to 80 students. Furthermore, the School-Within-a-School teachers report feeling somewhat isolated from the rest of Springdale High School, although their classrooms are in the midst of it; they say that many of the other teachers don't really understand what the four are trying to accomplish. Efforts are now underway to overcome this problem.

Despite these difficulties, the students, parents, and teachers involved with the school today are overwhelmingly enthusiastic. "We learn to use our minds," sophomore Jeff Tate told a visitor, echoing the sentiments of many of his classmates. Grace Donoho, whose daughter, Amy, is enrolled in the program, adds:

> **This fits with my feelings about education. I like the interdisciplinary approach — the kids learn that one thing relates to another. I like the family aspect of the program. Teachers are not only teachers, but counselors. They listen, and they are tuned into the students.**

Furthermore, Donoho reports, because Amy has improved her reasoning skills, "It's much more difficult for me to argue with her now." Teacher Fran Flynt sums up what she likes best about the program: "I'm teaching my students to be students for life."

The program has funds to continue in its current structure through at least the end of the 1988-89 school year. An ongoing evaluation of the School-Within-a-School will determine whether to maintain the program in its present form or in an altered one. Whatever the evaluation shows, Superintendent Jim Rollins believes that the best aspects of the program — developing students' abilities to think critically, for example — should be incorporated into far more American high school classrooms.

---

*CONTACT:*

Jim Rollins
Superintendent
Springdale School District #50
202 West Emma Avenue
P.O. Box 8
Springdale, Arkansas 72765-0008
(501) 751-9293

Harry Wilson
Principal
Springdale High School
1103 West Emma Avenue
Springdale, Arkansas 72764
(505) 751-4838

## COLORADO

**The school class that will graduate in the year 2000 entered kindergarten last year. These future high school graduates will encounter increasingly competitive environments. We've got to do better at educating all our youth to prepare them for the world of the future.**

*Governor Roy Romer*

## MAPLETON

| | |
|---|---|
| *LOCATION:* | Suburban Denver |
| *TYPE OF DISTRICT:* | Urban/suburban |
| *STUDENT ENROLLMENT:* | 5,000 |
| *RACIAL MIX:* | 69 percent white, 25 percent Hispanic, 6 percent other |
| *STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE- AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH:* | 29 percent |
| *REFORM AREAS:* | Technology<br>Early childhood programs for at-risk youngsters<br>Droput prevention |

At Monterey Elementary School in suburban Denver, 30 children have been loaned computers to take home. Under the watchful eye of their parents, these youngsters can practice mathematics and reading and play educational games. Their parents have received computer training in order to guide their children effectively. Principal Robert Seno reports that this experimental program has many beneficiaries:

- The students, most of whom lag behind their peers academically, can spend extra time mastering basic skills;
- The Monterey staff is rewarded because its students progress faster; and
- The parents learn to use computers and become more involved with their children's education.

A survey of parents found that an overwhelming majority liked the take-home program and felt that their children had learned from it. A computer company, Prescriptive Learning, paid the program's $19,000 cost during the 1987-88 school year; in the future, the district hopes to continue the program with other funding.

This take-home computer program is just part of a comprehensive plan that Mapleton school officials have initiated to introduce their students and staff to educational technology. By using computers, the district aims to make learning more attractive to students, and to help principals, teachers, parents, and students assess students' academic progress more efficiently. Superintendent Jack Blendinger reports that

during the past school year, 38 percent of all students and 48 percent of junior high and high school students used computers daily.

At the secondary level, computers are used largely to provide individualized remedial instruction and to gauge students' academic progress. Students who test at least 1 year below grade level use the Prescription Learning program, which on average enables students to progress at least one grade level for every 40 hours of classwork. In addition, an Ideal Learning program provides instruction in reading and mathematics (including algebra, geometry, trigonometry, calculus, and math analysis), language arts, Spanish, German, and physics. Business education, computer programming, and advanced writing classes also use computers. At the elementary level, computers are used to provide students with academic instruction as well as detailed report cards.

To address the needs of at-risk 3- and 4-year-olds, the Mapleton schools developed a special preschool program. Three-year-olds come twice a week for 2 hours and 4-year-olds come three times a week for 2 hours of instruction that Program Audiologist Jan Murphy describes as "very child-centered . . . We turn situations back to the kids and ask them, 'How would you do this?' so they can start to depend on themselves." The program helps the youngsters become more comfortable with other children and adults and helps prepare them for kindergarten. "We want them to have a positive self-image and develop good feelings about learning," Murphy explained. Each day begins with a welcome period, after which they spend time in small groups with an adult to plan what they will do for the day. Next they move to work time, during which they complete an activity (one day last February, most students used sponges to paint blue and red dinosaurs) and they conclude with a recall period, when they talk about what they did. At the end of the 1987-88 school year, the district planned to survey teachers and parents to gather subjective evidence of student growth. In the future, the district may also conduct a more quantitative evaluation.

A broad array of programs in Mapleton, ranging from a teen parent program to a peer counseling program, aims to reduce the 7 percent annual dropout rate. One program within Highland High School serves 76 teenagers, most of whom earned F's in the 9th grade, have attendance and discipline problems, and received test scores 2 years below grade level. Before this program began a year ago, these students usually caused problems during the first 9 weeks of school, after which they dropped out, according to Principal Billy Hufford. In this special program, students typically meet as a group at the start of each day for a short silent reading period, after which announcements are made and the daily schedule is announced. Students then divide into four groups for instruction in science, English, math, and special education (which provides them with chances to explore careers and receive any special help they need). On most days, they attend all four classes, but the schedule is flexible enough to provide, for example, a science class long enough for students to go on a field trip.

An alternative program outside the regular high school serves students who generally have more severe learning and behavior problems. Many of these students previously dropped out and are returning to earn a regular or a General Educational Development diploma. The 120 youngsters enrolled, who come not only from the Mapleton Public Schools but from throughout the area, have included everyone from armed robbers to emotionally troubled teens. In the alternative school, they receive a basic educational program and lots of individual academic help, and counselors are available to work with them on problems ranging from pregnancies to family suicides. Students entering the program sign a detailed agreement, which spells out everything from attendance requirements (a minimum of 5 classes a day or 25 classes in any week); to the school's drug policy (students caught using drugs in school are suspended). About one-third of those who enter the program, which has operated for 12 years, eventually earn a diploma, few of whom would do so at the traditional high school.

The Mapleton schools are also exploring the possibility of a partnership with universities and businesses. Thus far, nine companies have expressed an interest in the concept.

*CONTACT:* Jack Blendinger
Superintendent
Mapleton Public Schools
591 East 80th Street
Denver, Colorado 80229
(303) 288-6681

## MONTROSE

*LOCATION:* Western Colorado
*TYPE OF DISTRICT:* Small city/rural
*STUDENT ENROLLMENT:* 4,300
*RACIAL MIX:* 86 percent white, 13 percent Hispanic, 1 percent other
*STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE- AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH:* 35 percent
*REFORM AREAS:* Parent and community involvement
Redesigning schools
Dropout prevention

Until 2 years ago, most of the maps hanging in Montrose classrooms still contained the Belgian Congo. No matter that the African country has not been been called by that name since 1960, or that it has been the Republic of Zaire since 1971; Montrose had no money to replace the old maps with new ones.

Enter the Montrose Academic Booster Club, which for the past 4 years has responded to just this kind of need. The club is a nonprofit group with about 400 members. It stresses the importance of academic excellence and provides teachers with money for new programs that enhance the curriculum in areas from science to music to math. Its members include everyone from parents, who might contribute $15 a year, to banks and wealthy individuals, who might contribute anywhere from $500 to $1,000. Teachers, administrators, and other community residents also belong.

In one important respect, the booster club is typical of many reform efforts in Montrose: it is based on a belief that successful schools require parents, teachers, administrators, and community members to assume nontraditional duties. Superintendent Robert Cito explains, "This is not a shift but an expansion of responsibilities, and a more enlightened sense of each individual's responsibility in the education process." The booster club, like other efforts in Montrose that attempt to involve more parents, enables the schools to respond more effectively to community needs.

Significantly, the booster club is governed not by the district, but by a board of 12 community members. Since the club began, it has pumped more than $65,000 in grants into the public schools. The club will not pay for items like textbooks that should come out of the district's general operating budget. But it will pay for special items like airfare for a student to attend a national speech competition or new maps for Montrose classrooms. On behalf of teachers frustrated with the out-of-date maps, the club launched a Montrose Maps the World campaign, which netted $18,000 to replace them, an amount the school district matched. The organization also contains a committee to recognize student academic achievement.

In other efforts to involve more parents, each Montrose school has established a Parent Advisory Committee composed of parents and teachers who meet regularly to talk about the curriculum, school policies, activities, goals, and facilities. Each committee selects one member to serve on the systemwide Accountability Committee, which discusses the same topics from a district perspective. A community task force was also established recently to study the mid-level grades in Montrose. As a result of its recommendations and those of teachers, the district has reorganized the grade configurations of its schools.

Efforts to redesign the schools in Montrose require staff members to step out of traditional roles by becoming more involved in decisions that affect them. "It works to everyone's benefit to give our teachers a stake in all aspects of education, from the selection of materials to the configuration of our schools," Cito says. Therefore, teachers are actively involved in ongoing development of the curriculum, which is revised every 6 years. Teachers from each school and grade level serve on teams, each of which sets objectives for the students in a specific curriculum area, decides what matter should be taught and in what order,

and selects materials. Teachers have also been actively involved in recent decisions to reorganize grade configurations: this fall, the eight elementary schools will house kindergarten through 5th grades; the two middle schools 6th and 7th grades; the one junior high 8th and 9th grades; and the two high schools 10th through 12th grades. Teachers designed everything from curricula to attendance policies to extracurricular activities in these restructured schools. Finally, teachers help hire teachers and administrators, and they participate in a peer analysis program that enables them to constructively critique each other.

To reduce the dropout rate, Montrose began developing a comprehensive program in 1986 when 12 percent of its students left school. A task force of 18 community people developed a strategy to identify potential dropouts and deal with those who had already left school. With a grant from the Colorado legislature, the district then hired a full-time dropout prevention program director. Within 18 months after the comprehensive program began, the dropout rate in Montrose had fallen to 6 percent, which school officials attribute to a range of activities: tutor and mentor programs, workshops for students to teach study skills and parenting skills, teacher training workshops, and an expanded counseling program. A program called "Community for Drug-free Youth" was also organized.

In addition, the dropout prevention program led to the creation of a summer school program for at-risk students in grades 5 through 8. Students attend classes for 4 days a week for 5 weeks. Following breakfast and a morning meeting, students receive 3 hours of intensive help in listening, reading, speaking, writing, and vocabulary. After lunch, students attend two 1-hour sessions of Spanish culture, computers, drama, or tae kwon do, a Korean martial art resembling karate. Teachers are carefully selected, and the curriculum is designed to emphasize "hands-on" activities. During the 1987 summer, the 60 participants improved their reading achievement levels by an average of 1 year and 3 months.

To provide students aged 16 to 21 with another opportunity to obtain a high school diploma, the district began a Second Chance program. It provides flexible hours to accommodate students with varying schedules, as well as materials adapted to the participants' different needs and abilities. Some of the young adults enrolled never received a diploma and return for a GED. Others received a diploma but didn't acquire sufficient basic skills to do well in the work world. "We say that if [a hardware store] hires someone who cannot read the instructions to put a lawnmower together, and they have a diploma from Montrose, then we've cheated that youngster," Cito explained. The superintendent asks area employers to keep these young people on their payrolls, but send them back to school after work hours at the district's expense to learn what they missed the first time.

Other dropout prevention efforts include an elementary school program to boost self-esteem, a community tutor and mentor program to help at-risk students, and a peer counseling program.

*CONTACT:* Robert Cito
Superintendent
Montrose County School District
126 South 5th Street
P.O. Box 219
Montrose, Colorado 81402
(303) 249-7726

## MISSOURI

**Project Education Reform is a vital part of our overall effort to make Missouri schools better, and to make Missouri's future brighter.**

*Governor John Ashcroft*

## COLUMBIA

| | |
|---|---|
| *LOCATION:* | Central Missouri |
| *TYPE OF DISTRICT:* | Medium-sized city |
| *STUDENT ENROLLMENT:* | 12,020 |
| *RACIAL MIX:* | 87 percent white, 12 percent black, 1 percent other |
| *STUDENTS REEIVING FREE- AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH:* | 27 percent |
| *REFORM AREAS:* | Programs for parents of preschool children<br>Parent involvement<br>Training programs for administrators involving partnerships<br>Dropout prevention programs |

Since 1960, the Columbia Public Schools have held 16 tax referenda and bond issues. Voters have said yes to all of them — by an average margin of nearly 4 to 1. Such a record reflects the support that this Missouri community has historically lent its public schools. Today, 75 percent of the adult population has attended college (56 percent have graduated), and half of the adults are employed in medicine or education (Columbia is home to several academic institutions, including the University of Missouri).

School officials believe this environment eases reform efforts because the community *wants* better schools. In an effort to provide them, the district has created programs for parents of preschool youngsters and has developed ways to involve parents more in their children's education.

■ First, Columbia has a Parents as Teachers program to provide mothers and fathers with information on how to be better parents. State law requires all Missouri districts to offer such a program based on the work of child development expert and author Burton White. He believes that the years from birth through age 3 are critical for a child's intellectual and social development, but sadly enough, White observes, "You get more information on the care of your new car than you do a new baby." Columbia's Parents as Teachers employs a program coordinator and 8 parent educators who serve about 550 families. Mothers and fathers attend meetings to learn about everything from what to expect of a newborn baby (periods of wakefulness that increase from 2 to 3 minutes an hour to 6 to 7 minutes an hour) to what toys a child from 14 to 24 months will most enjoy (pails for pouring, empty boxes of all sizes, and plastic containers with lids). About five times a year, the families receive home visits from the parent educators, who provide whatever guidance the mothers and fathers need to give their children a strong start in life. The comments of program participant Linda Jones, who has 3-year-old and 10-month-old sons, are typical: "I've learned what to expect of my children at a particular age. It's nice to know that when you are going through rough times, you aren't alone." (An evaluation of the Parents as Teachers program is contained in the description of reform efforts in Independence.)

■ Second, Columbia has formed a Partners in Education program to involve parents and the community more actively in the schools. All 21 schools in Columbia are paired with at least 1 business, hospital, or college. These partnerships allow the schools to share their educational assets with the business community, which in turn can contribute its resources to the schools. Each school has formed a steering committee, which meets monthly to discuss partnership activities and which reports regularly to the program's district-wide coordinator. The businesses include the Commerce Bank of Columbia, whose entry foyer looks as much like an elementary school classroom as it does a financial institution. Brightly-colored children's drawings of flags from around the world decorate one wall, each of them representing a country that participated in the Winter Olympics. Indeed, the spirit of nearby Parkade Elementary School, whose students produced this artwork, is present throughout the bank. Commerce Bank President Daniel Scotten estimates that from 60 to 70 percent of his employees have contact with Parkade youngsters in activities that range from pizza parties and volleyball games to "shadowing" days when students can follow around a bank employee to learn about his or her job. At the secondary level, West Junior High is paired with the Shelter Insurance Companies, which has had some of its employees exchange jobs with teachers for the day and has sponsored a "Great American Smokeout" to help junior high students quit smoking.

■ Third, the district involves parents in its early childhood programs for children from birth through age 5 who have moderate to severe handicaps. The programs' staffs spend almost as much time

with parents as with the handicapped children themselves, teaching them how to help their children strive toward their greatest potential.

■ Finally, a 10-year-old volunteer program has allowed the district to involve still more community members and parents in the schools. Columbia recently formalized its program and hired a director of school and community programs. The volunteers, who last year donated 20,000 hours of their time, go through an orientation and training, and teachers receive information and training on how to more effectively use volunteers. Their talents have been used for everything from assisting with math and reading instruction to setting up science experiments and working with handicapped children.

In another area of reform, Columbia has expanded its training program for school administrators. Several administrators have attended State-sponsored administrative academies, and many have attended national conferences. Discussions were to be held this summer with officials at the University of Missouri and management personnel from several businesses in partnerships with Columbia schools to see how they can share their management training programs. Administrators also receive special instruction in the elements of effective teaching so that they can help teachers do their jobs better.

In a fourth area of reform, Columbia has established an alternative program for potential dropouts. Students who have a hard time thriving in Columbia's traditional junior highs and high schools can attend the Secondary Learning Center. Many of the 90 youngsters it enrolls come from broken homes, most have poor academic records, and almost all have low self-esteem. "It's more relaxed here than in a regular school," explains Timothy Travers, the center's director. Classes at the center are smaller than they are in a regular school, and each teacher is assigned 6 or 7 students whom he or she meets with daily to provide support and monitor progress. The teacher also maintains contact with the students' parents. Youngsters are not allowed to miss more than 4 unexcused days of school per semester if they wish to receive credit. They study traditional subjects (English, social studies, science, math, art, reading, home economics), in addition to which they enroll in vocational and clerical programs, attend parenting classes, and work part time. Close to 90 percent of the participants improve their attendance and their grades. Nineteen-year-old Tammy Horne provides one explanation: "You don't have the tensions of the regular (high) school. It's like you're treated like a person here."

*CONTACT:* John Stolt
Associate Superintendent of Instruction
Columbia School District
Administration Building
1818 West Worley Street
Columbia, Missouri 65203
(314) 445-8541

## INDEPENDENCE

| | |
|---|---|
| *LOCATION:* | Western Missouri |
| *TYPE OF DISTRICT:* | Suburban |
| *STUDENT ENROLLMENT:* | 11,216 |
| *RACIAL MIX:* | 94 percent white, 2 percent black, 4 percent other |
| *STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE- AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH:* | 20 percent |
| *REFORM AREAS:* | Redesigning the schools<br>Programs for parents of preschool children<br>Changing the structure of the teaching career |

This fall, 9 of the 13 elementary schools in Independence will assume a responsibility that has not traditionally been handled by American public schools. As a part of its Twenty-First Century Schools project, the district will provide daycare.

The project is based on the ideas of Edward F. Zigler, an international childcare expert, who believes an extensive daycare system should be intricately woven into the very structure of our society. Independence, where about 65 percent of all mothers with school-aged children work outside the home, will be his first model project. It will include:

- A child care program for school-aged children up to age 12, which will be available both before and after regular classes;
- Daycare for 3- and 4-year-olds that will run the entire day;
- A parent education program for parents of children from birth to age 3 (this program is already in place);
- A referral system for parents in need of daycare; and
- A strong partnership of parents and the schools.

Zigler believes daycare should not be babysitting; therefore, Independence children will participate in activities including basketball, music lessons, and computer classes. Local foundations and the Missouri Department of Education will contribute to training and start-up costs, but modest fees (for all but low-income parents unable to afford them) eventually are expected to sustain the program. Zigler and an associate will train the staff and evaluate the daycare part of the project.

In 1981, Independence became one of the first four districts in Missouri to launch a Parents as Teachers program similar in most respects to the one begun 3 years later in Columbia. (See Columbia section for a description.) The Independence program is also based on the work of Burton White and provides classes as well as information and home visits to parents.

Under contract first with the Missouri Department of Education and later with the Independence schools, an independent evaluator has con-

ducted two studies of the Parents as Teachers program. The first study, which was based on a sample of participants in the first four model programs in Missouri including Independence, showed that the children whose parents were enrolled in them scored significantly higher on all measures of intelligence, achievement, and verbal and language abilities than did nonparticipants. Furthermore, the parents reported that their children more often had strong self-identities, had positive relations with adults, and could cope well with new situations. Also significant was that traditional measures of "risk" (parents' age and education, income, number of younger siblings, and the amount of alternate care received) bore little or no relationship to test results — in other words, the Parents as Teachers parents and children performed well regardless of socioeconomic background or other traditional risk factors. The second study, based solely on participants in Independence, reached similar conclusions.

As another part of its efforts to redesign schools, Independence is studying Japanese management techniques, which have the reputation for enabling the relationship between that country's bosses and employees to move from confrontational to cooperative. Superintendent Robert Henley is uncomfortable with the adversarial relationship that traditionally exists between teachers and school administrators, particularly during contract negotiations. To improve this relationship, a group of district administrators and teachers hopes in the near future to visit the GM/Toyota plant in California, which has gained success by using Japanese techniques with American workers. (Thus far, several scheduled visits to the plant have fallen through.) Eventually, the district would like to produce a brochure listing what districts can do to make the relationship between teachers and administrators more congenial.

To change the structure of the teaching career, Independence has developed a career ladder program, giving teachers the chance to earn more money in return for assuming more responsibilities. The program, which just completed its second year, follows a model that the Missouri Department of Education developed after the State's Excellence in Education Act of 1984 provided money for career ladder programs. (Last year, Independence paid 45 percent of the $827,425 expense; the State paid for the rest.) School officials hope that, by rewarding excellent teaching, the program will encourage teachers to do their best work. They also hope it will foster teachers' professional growth, and that it will encourage teachers to remain in the profession.

The program has three levels. Teachers on the first level receive an additional $1,500, on the second level an extra $3,000, and on the third level $5,000. Qualifications and responsibilities increase with each step. For example, a step 1 career ladder teacher must possess 5 years of teaching experience in the Missouri public schools, while a step 3 teacher must have taught for 10 years; a step 1 teacher might par-

ticipate in building or district curriculum committees, whereas a step 3 teacher might develop or coordinate summer programs.

A district evaluation completed after the first year of the program found that it achieved its goals, that teachers assumed a broader range of responsibilities than they would have without the program, and that the program encouraged many to receive additional training.

*CONTACT:* Robert Henley
Superintendent
Independence School District
1231 South Windsor
Independence, Missouri 64055
(815) 833-3433

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

### TIMBERLANE

| | |
|---|---|
| *LOCATION:* | Southeastern New Hampshire |
| *TYPE OF DISTRICT:* | Suburban |
| *STUDENT ENROLLMENT:* | 2,924 |
| *RACIAL MIX:* | 99 percent white, 1 percent other |
| *STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE- AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH:* | 6 percent |
| *REFORM AREAS:* | Changing the structure of the teaching career<br>Administrative Evaluations<br>Training for administrators that involve partnerships<br>Technology |

In 1984, the Timberlane Regional School District in southern New Hampshire instituted a Performance Based Salary Program which has, according to Superintendent Terrance Holmes, "changed the culture around here."

The superintendent says that teachers today in Timberlane "are more aggressive" and "are more apt to look out for themselves" than they were before the the district began a comprehensive program linking pay partly to job performance. Furthermore, he believes the quality of teaching has improved significantly. The Timberlane School Board began the program with hopes of making its professional salaries more competitive, of attracting the best and most qualified staff, and of developing strong standards of excellence for teachers. The Timberlane Teachers Association, an independent organization not aligned with

any State or national association, agreed to the program as part of a 5-year contract that also extended their work year from 186 to 192 days and gave teachers annual salary increases ranging from 5 to 25 percent.

The program requires every teacher to be evaluated at least three times a year. (The principal must evaluate all of his or her staff at least once.) At the start of the school year, evaluators and teachers meet to set goals. At least one of the evaluations, each of which lasts from 20 to 45 minutes, must be announced in advance. While observing the teacher, the evaluator takes notes on everything from how the teacher uses his time to how much students participate. Then the evaluator writes up his findings (concentrating on the positives), and meets with the teacher (where he discusses the positives and the negatives). A year-end conference based on all the observation reports is also held. Teachers receive an overall ranking for their work, which is used to help determine their salaries for the next school year. (The evaluation procedure is somewhat different for first- and second-year teachers.)

Principal Judy Deshaies, like many other Timberlane administrators, lauds the program for making teacher evaluations a top priority, for stimulating teachers who resist change, and for raising district expectations for students. "Poor teaching practices in Timberlane do not go unnoticed or unaddressed," she says. On the negative side, she says the program is extraordinarily time-consuming, and that some teachers feel the evaluations place them under enormous stress.

Not all teachers — particularly those who received average or lower rankings — assess the program as positively as the superintendent or Deshaies. A comprehensive study prepared for the New Hampshire School Boards Association praised the program for attempting to deal with inequities inherent in a traditional salary schedule. The study was completed by two professors from the University of Connecticut and the University of New Hampshire with a grant from the U.S. Secretary of Education's Discretionary Grant Fund. It found that teachers were divided in their enthusiasm for the program; critics felt it had hurt morale and worsened the relationship between teachers and administrators. Teachers also reported that the money offered under the plan is insufficient to motivate them, and that the evaluations were too subjective. The study concluded, however, that any problems did not warrant a return to the more traditional approach of compensating teachers. Timberlane administrators and teachers say they expect the evaluation system to continue, but in the future performance may not necessarily be linked to pay.

Timberlane does not restrict its evaluations to teachers; it also has a system in place that judges administrators and links their pay to performance. Because the role of the principal is changing, the district is revising its evaluation system. Until a new system is devised, the district is using an interim plan. It calls for principals to be evaluated on skills that include an ability to make decisions, to provide vision, to

manage students, to establish good community relations, and to foster professional growth of the staff.

To gain better skills, several administrators in Timberlane have attended training programs at the University of New Hampshire, Harvard University, and the Principals Academy program in New Hampshire. The district is also working with the State Principals Association to obtain Federal money to establish a School Administrative Resource Center at the University of New Hampshire.

To improve its use of technology, Timberlane has completed a 5-year plan to bring technology into the schools and has written a curriculum for computer education in all grades. The computer instruction ranges from the IBM Writing to Read program for the youngest children (a description of which is provided in the Orangeburg section) to special computer programs in reading and mathematics for high school students needing remedial help.

*CONTACT:* Terrance Holmes
Superintendent
Timberlane Regional School District
30 Greenough Road
Plaistow, New Hampshire 03865
(603) 382-6119

## White Mountains

| | |
|---|---|
| *LOCATION:* | North central New Hampshire |
| *TYPE OF DISTRICT:* | Small town/rural |
| *STUDENT ENROLLMENT:* | 1,566 |
| *RACIAL MIX:* | 99 percent white, 1 percent black |
| *STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE- AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH:* | 35 percent |
| *REFORM AREAS:* | Technology<br>Redesigning the schools<br>Training programs for administrators that involve partnerships<br>Student assessment |

Last year, Art Hammond estimates that his junior high science students collectively answered 468,000 test questions, and that altogether he handed out 15,600 student grades. "For a teacher to keep track of all those without a good recording system is impossible," Hammond says. "But with computers it's easier — and they make it possible to open the grade books to parents."

Hammond is one of about 100 teachers in the White Mountains schools in New Hampshire who has his own computer to use for everything from recording grades to developing lesson plans. Three years ago, the district applied for and was awarded an $81,000 grant from the Governor's Initiative for Excellence in Education program, which it used to provide computers for all elementary school teachers wanting one. This past year, an additional grant paid for computers for the high school staff. (The district also contributed funds.)

"What we did is unique," Superintendent Edgar Melanson said. "We put computers in the hands of the teachers instead of the kids." His theory is that teachers must understand computers before their students will embrace them enthusiastically. Melanson believes computers are a particularly important link to the rest of the world for a district like White Mountains, which is small, quite rural, mostly lower middle class, and relatively isolated (a 2-hour drive north of Manchester).

Thorough training convinced some skeptics that they could benefit from computers. "If anyone had technophobia, I was the worst in the district," elementary school teacher Bonnie Hicks admits. "But the trainer said that even a monkey could learn to use one." Teachers including Hicks now report that the computers have not reduced their overall workload, although the quality of services they provide has vastly improved. For example, computerized records allow the district to send home report cards to parents every 3 weeks, detailing everything from test scores to classroom behavior records. As a result, Hammond reports, "Parents have stopped being adversaries and have started participating in the educational process."

In an effort to redesign the schools, the district has reorganized its 4th through 6th grades. Traditionally, elementary school children have just one teacher in a self-contained classroom for the entire school day. Three years ago, the district began providing its 4th through 6th grades with four teachers — one for English, another for math and computers, one for science, and a fourth for social studies. Students move as a group from one class to the next. School officials believe this approach enables the district to make good use of each elementary teacher's strengths, gives students variety during the day, and teaches them to adjust to different teachers. The one drawback is that a few students are not mature enough to adjust well to the shifting. (School officials did not consider a similar arrangement for kindergarten through 3rd graders because they felt it was important for very young children to develop a close relationship with just one teacher.) The district plans eventually to evaluate the reorganization by comparing test scores of 4th through 6th graders in the traditional and new grouping arrangements.

To provide more training for school administrators and staff, the White Mountains schools have cooperated with several area facilities. All building principals have attended a State principal's academy. Staff from the University of New Hampshire district has joined with the

University of New Hampshire to present 10 workshops within the district for teachers of mathematics. Other cooperative ventures are now being studied.

The district has also improved the way it assesses student achievement. New Hampshire mandates tests in grades 4, 8, and 10. White Mountains also tests in grades 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9 and has used its findings to help gauge the effectiveness of its curriculum and to revise curriculum guides in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

*CONTACT:* Edgar Melanson
Superintendent
White Mountains Regional School District
21 Highland Street
Whitefield, New Hampshire 03598
(603) 837-9363

## NEW JERSEY

### PARAMUS

*LOCATION:* Northern New Jersey
*TYPE OF DISTRICT:* Suburban/urban
*STUDENT ENROLLMENT:* 3,300
*RACIAL MIX:* 84 percent white, 13 percent Asian, 3 percent other
*STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE- AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH:* 1 percent
*REFORM AREAS:* Early childhood education for at-risk youngsters
Dropout prevention program
Parent involvement
Administrator evaluations

Through the years, the Paramus schools have initiated many programs intended to improve their quality. So as a participant in Project Education Reform, Paramus aimed *not* to start new programs, but to fine-tune those it already had.

The district has served at-risk 4-year-olds, many from disadvantaged backgrounds, since 1974. Youngsters diagnosed as having problems during a careful screening process are assigned to one of five half-day classes, each of which meets three times a week. Here, they receive individualized instruction in speech and language and are closely supervised in play activities. (Children found to be handicapped are enrolled in a special regional preschool.) One day last December, students in the

morning-long classes learned colors, helped their teachers make potato pancakes and pour apple juice, and painted at easels. In these and other activities, staff members encourage children to explore; teachers prefer that a preschooler spill his juice while attempting to pour it (and then help to clean it up) than never to attempt this feat.

Parents are encouraged to visit the preschool, where they can sit in the classroom or observe their children from a special room adjacent to it with a one-way mirror. Working parents can visit one Saturday in February. Parent education and support groups are offered for 6 weeks in the fall and spring.

Children still considered at-risk after completing the program are placed in a transitional kindergarten with an adult-to-child ratio of 1 to 6. Most of these youngsters enter the regular kindergarten program the following year, although a few move directly into the 1st grade.

District educators soon hope to offer the program to 3-year-olds, and to expand the entire early childhood program from 3 to 5 half-days. They also hope to collect longitudinal data to evaluate the current program, and to offer an English for Mom and Me program for the growing number of non-English speaking mothers and their children.

In an effort to continue holding down its dropout rate, which during the 1986-87 school year was 1.6 percent, the district developed the Paramus Transitional Program as an alternative route to a high school diploma. Of the 179 students who have entered the program since it began in 1978, all but 17 have graduated, and 9 have gone on to college. District educators are now tracking program graduates to see how they are doing.

Those referred to the program have poor academic and attendance records. Many come from broken homes and have personal problems and low self-esteem. School officials aim to get students back into the regular high school program after they attend for a minimum of one semester. While enrolled in the transitional program, students study math, history, English, family living, and health, and they also take gym and an elective. Those enrolled get more personal attention than they would in the regular high school; two teachers plus an aide are assigned to the 17 to 18 students attending at one time. The staff lets the teenagers know that poor attendance is unacceptable, and on occasion, "We'll drive to their homes and drag them out, sheets and all," reports Richard Piazza, coordinator of the Paramus Community School, which houses the transitional program. He believes the students benefit from the program's setting within the community school, where they are visible and have contacts with everyone from adult learners, to toddlers, to other high school students.

Although many enter the program reluctantly, most later say they greatly prefer the transitional program. "I went from a D-to-F student to an A-to-B student," said 17-year-old Tom Pascale, who has been enrolled in the program for more than a year. "I was goofing around and

cutting classes, and all I cared about was me and my friends hanging out." He also admits to being "a pain in the tail" when he first enrolled in the transitional program, but since then he's improved not only his academic record, but also his behavior and attendance. He now hopes to enroll in post-high school training in forest technology. The district recently added peer and family counseling to the program.

In another reform area, Paramus has devised ways to involve more parents in their children's education. The district has a Parent Education Council composed of parents, teachers, and administrators who discuss issues ranging from drug prevention education to decisions about the length of the kindergarten day. Parents are also members of the district's Curriculum Instructional Council, which discusses all curriculum and instructional proposals and makes recommendations to the superintendent. The district conducts classes for preschool youngsters and their parents with hopes that this will set the stage for continued parental involvement, making a special effort to include non-English-speaking participants. Superintendent Harry Galinsky also meets monthly with PTA presidents, and the district has mailed a brochure to all parents outlining ways that they can become involved. Finally, the district has applied to be a demonstration site for a statewide initiative, Parents Are Partners, which aims at finding effective ways to improve the relationship between home and school. To gauge results in this entire area, the district hopes by 1991 to have data demonstrating a growth in the number of parents involved in school activities and projects.

In a fourth reform area, Paramus is updating its principal evaluation plan, some form of which has been in place for 15 years. The district places a high priority on these evaluations because, Galinksy explains, "Where you find outstanding principals, you find outstanding schools." The current system calls for each principal to work with a primary evaluator to put together a professional improvement plan. Observations, conferences, and self-evaluations are also parts of the present system. The district is currently assessing these procedures and plans and is reviewing research on principal evaluation practices being used elsewhere. It soon expects to review and revise principals' job descriptions, expand staff development and training for them, and hire a consultant to assess the principal evaluation project. Galinsky hopes a new evaluation system eventually will link a principal's evaluation to his or her pay.

*CONTACT:* Harry Galinsky
Superintendent
Paramus Public Schools
Spring Valley Road
Paramus, New Jersey 07652
(201) 261-7800

## UNION

| | |
|---|---|
| *LOCATION:* | Central New Jersey |
| *TYPE OF DISTRICT:* | Suburban/urban |
| *STUDENT ENROLLMENT:* | 6,000 |
| *RACIAL MIX:* | 83 percent white, 17 percent other |
| *STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE- AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH:* | 8.5 percent |
| *REFORM AREAS:* | Technology<br>Shared facilities<br>Dropout prevention |

On top of the Empire State Building sits a microwave television transmitter, one of many there used to send programs throughout the New York area. It belongs not to one of the networks, however, but to the Union, New Jersey, public schools. Union is the only district in New Jersey to hold a Federal Communications Commission-approved microwave license.

The microwave transmitter on the Empire State allows a consortium of 10 districts in the New York metropolitan area to receive Union's educational programs. Union's own programs now reach 100,000 viewers. Since the district is obliged to broadcast 40 hours a week, it leases the time from 4 p.m. to 8 a.m. to a wireless cable company in New York City, which during these hours broadcasts cable programs to its subscribers. The district eventually hopes to earn at least $250,000 annually from its business venture in television.

Further efforts to introduce technology into the schools include a 2-year course in television arts and sciences, for which the district acquired its own studio with Federal grants. About 75 students, some hoping for careers in television, are enrolled. Union also has installed computer labs in every school, has computer-automated vocational shops, and uses computers to track student records, schedules, and test scores as well as to send out report cards.

The district's other reform efforts include programs to share its facilities with community groups. A decline in student enrollment, which peaked at 9,000, has enabled Union to lease out many of its classrooms. At Burnet Junior High School, the Biertuempfel Senior Center flourishes under the sponsorship of the municipal government, which rents space from the district for $12,000 a year. About 1,400 senior citizens come for a wide range of activities, such as planning group trips to Atlantic City and Tahiti, enrolling in ceramics or ballroom dancing classes, and playing pool and bowling. (One 93-year-old gentleman bowls weekly as part of center activities, boasting an

average score of 190.) Director Robert Armstrong believes the senior center has helped the district to improve its relationship with the community and has helped the senior citizens and junior high students at Burnet to break down stereotypes they held of each other.

Vacant space at Union High School houses the district's Allied Health Professions program. It has three parts: instruction in the basics of health care professions, a daycare center for toddlers run by the local YMCA, and a senior citizen daycare center run by nearby Union Hospital. Superintendent James Caulfield says the community benefits by operating the programs in a secure school environment, and the district benefits financially because these agencies pay rent. Furthermore, students get opportunities to work with toddlers and with senior citizens, as well as to get important career direction through their involvement with Union Hospital. The district's Office of Volunteer Services, which has enabled about 100 residents to contribute 3,000 hours of time, has also drawn community residents into the schools.

The district has undertaken major efforts to hold its annual dropout rate to 1 percent. District officials attribute this partly to the presence of an "intervention" teacher at every elementary and secondary school. This person does everything from coaxing reluctant attendees back to class, to guiding children with alcoholic parents. Intervention teacher Ron Meyers worked with the family of a 4-year-old who, he said, out of sight of an adult "will put paint in her mouth, eat buttons off her dress, and stuff something down the toilet." With support and special services, district officials hope the girl can improve her behavior — and her chances to succeed in school.

Preschool is offered to every parent wanting it for his or her child, with hopes that this too will hold down the dropout rate. The district screens all entering preschoolers and provides special guidance to particularly needy ones. Union also provides full-day kindergarten for every child.

As an alternative to suspension, the district sponsors Saturday detention for 7th through 12th graders. Anywhere from 50 to 100 youngsters show up for 4 hours each Saturday, homework in hand, for the highly structured sessions in the high school cafeteria. A psychologist and social worker are available during this time to work with them, and parents are invited to attend counseling sessions.

District educators believe a number of other programs and practices may also contribute to Union's low dropout rate: the C.O.S.T. (Career On-Site Training) program, which enables disruptive youngsters to work half-days at local industries; a junior Reserve Officers Training Corp (Caulfield says it attracts many students who "love the discipline, the uniform, and the status that goes with this program"); the

Accredited Evening High School, which provides an alternative setting in which to earn a diploma; and moderate class sizes (as enrollment has declined, Union has reduced class sizes).

*CONTACT:* James Caulfield
Superintendent
Township of Union Public Schools
2369 Morris Avenue
Union, New Jersey 07083
(201) 688-1200

## SOUTH CAROLINA

### ORANGEBURG

| | |
|---|---|
| *LOCATION:* | Central South Carolina |
| *TYPE OF DISTRICT:* | Medium-sized town |
| *STUDENT ENROLLMENT:* | 6,300 |
| *RACIAL MIX:* | 80 percent black, 20 percent white |
| *STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE- AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH:* | 75 percent |
| *REFORM AREAS:* | Changing the structure of the teaching career<br>Technology<br>School-based management<br>Dropout prevention |

Ten years ago, few if any of the 16 school districts involved in Project Education Reform were more in need of improvement than Orangeburg. Many of its problems were rooted in the community's history of racial tension, which peaked in 1968 when the State police, called to quell an unruly campus demonstration at South Carolina State College, shot point blank into a group of students, killing 3 and injuring 27 others. Two years after the Orangeburg Massacre, the public schools were desegregated and 1,200 students left, most for segregated academies. Test scores plunged, as did staff morale.

Today, says Superintendent James Wilsford, "This district is on a roll." Passage of the State's Education Improvement Act in 1984 helped raise teaching salaries and provided merit bonuses for outstanding teachers. The Scholastic Aptitude Test scores of Orangeburg students still hover under both State and national averages. But overall, test scores have rebounded dramatically, and the dropout rate has shrunk to an annual rate of 2.5 percent. The climb from educational oblivion began before Orangeburg became one of the chosen 16 school districts; Wilsford and

his staff selected several areas in *Time for Results* that they hoped would hasten the ascent.

To change the structure of the teaching career, the district planned a lead teacher program during the 1987-88 school year, which the school board was expected to approve in July. Wilsford believes such a program might enable talented teachers to remain in the classrom instead of moving to more lucrative jobs in administration. (At age 36, he, too, was drawn from the classroom into management, partly because he wanted more money to support his family.) Each lead teacher will continue teaching part-time, but will also guide a cadre of about eight other teachers — for example, by serving as a mentor to new teachers and observing and coaching peers, or by assessing and developing curriculum. Lead teachers will not be asked during the 1988-89 school year to develop budgets, evaluate peers, or assume other traditional administrative roles, although they eventually may do so. The salary for 11 months of employment is expected to range from $34,000 to $45,000, based on teaching and leadership experience and educational background. These amounts are about $5,000 above what a regular teacher with comparable qualifications would receive. Most Orangeburg teachers support the lead teacher concept, which Wilsford attributes to their early involvement in its planning. The major concern Orangeburg educators express is that selection of lead teachers not become a popularity contest.

The district is also expanding its use of educational technology. Computers can be found throughout the entire district, but nowhere are they as visible as in Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School, which boasts about 200 of them for its 2,000 students. Here, they help boost skills of students who have failed all or a portion of the State's Basic Skills Assessment Program test, which in 2 years all South Carolina students will have to pass to graduate. (In 1986, 35 percent of the 10th graders passed the test; in 1987, 46 percent did. This past year, 68 percent passed the reading portion of the test, and 71 percent passed the math portion.) Computers are found, too, in the high school's central office, in science labs, and in business classrooms.

Orangeburg also uses computers for:

- An IBM Writing to Read program, which teaches kindergarten and 1st grade students how to use sounds to write words;
- A Quill writing program that, among other things, teaches 4th graders that writing requires not only putting words together, but also revising and rewriting; and
- Management functions, including keeping track of attendance, grades, and student schedules.

To move toward school-based management, Orangeburg plans this fall to give its principals, teachers, and parents more authority to decide budget matters. The central administration will continue to decide the

total amount each school can spend. But individual schools will be able to decide how to use their discretionary money — for example, whether to send a teacher to a conference or to spend the same money on a new television or copying machine. The district has also altered its evaluation system for administrators to make it more compatible with recommendations in *Time for Results*.

Orangeburg's dropout prevention efforts include several parts. First, the district provides all-day instruction for at-risk 4-year-olds. Second, it offers an extra class period each day for students in grades 1 to 12 who score below the State's Basic Skills Assessment Program standards in reading, writing, and/or mathematics. In the future, the district expects to extend vocational education and job training for students failing the high school exit exam and for handicapped students not receiving a diploma.

*CONTACT:* James Wilsford
Superintendent
Orangeburg School District #5
578 Ellis Avenue
Orangeburg, South Carolina 29115
(803) 534-5454

## SPARTANBURG

*LOCATION:* North central South Carolina
*TYPE OF DISTRICT:* Small city
*STUDENT ENROLLMENT:* 9,300
*RACIAL MIX:* 51 percent black, 49 percent white
*STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE- OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH:* 47.5 percent
*REFORM AREAS:* Parent involvement
Technology
Early childhood programs for at-risk youngsters
Administrative evaluations

Spartanburg serves many gifted students from professional families drawn by the area's diversified industry, as well as at-risk youngsters usually from low-income backgrounds. The district has fewer students than one would normally find, however, who fall midway between the two extremes. As a participant in Project Education Reform, Spartanburg created ways to serve students on both ends of the economic spectrum.

To involve more parents in their children's education, each school devised its own plans. In a building like Cleveland Elementary, where 70 percent of the students come from low-income families and half lack

telephones, plans were somewhat different than they were in a more well-to-do school like Boyd Elementary.

The district recently completed a survey to gauge parental participation in activities that span areas from academic, to social, to clerical. The survey showed that parents tutor in classrooms, plan and attend ceremonies to honor students excelling academically, and attend school science fairs. They chaperone field trips and other school events, assist at school carnivals and dances, attend parent luncheons and teas, monitor lunch groups, serve as room mothers, provide refreshments for various school functions, and volunteer their typing and filing skills. They serve on school improvement and ad hoc committees, make contacts with the business community, plan career days, and serve as guest lecturers. The schools also have many ways to communicate with parents, ranging from conferences, to telephone calls, to folders of students' work that get sent home weekly, to parent/teacher conferences. Four elementary schools also sponsor workshops to help mothers and fathers become more effective parents.

In the area of technology, Spartanburg had already made significant headway before becoming involved in Project Education Reform. But it has used its participation as "a chance to assess where we were and where we want to be," said Carol Ellis, the district's mathematics coordinator and computer contact. Recently, the district put in place the OSIRIS system to keep thorough records of everything from student attendance to test scores and schedules; with the push of a button, school administrators can compile lists of everything from grades given in a particular classroom, to all the students suspended during a certain time period. The district also uses a LOGO program in elementary and junior high schools as a supplement to the mathematics program. The LOGO program familiarizes students with computers and helps cover topics in geometry that are included in the State's Basic Skills Assessment Program. One day last January, students at Cleveland Elementary used LOGO to build triangles; the program simultaneously helps them learn to follow directions and to understand sequence. (A different LOGO program is also used in the district's Program for Academically Gifted Elementary Studies.) Down the hallway at Cleveland is an Education Systems Corporation (ESC) learning center, one of several in the district where students receive individualized instruction in math and reading for 30 minutes each day. School officials believe this program, which enables each child to work at his or her own rate and receive instant feedback, is particularly effective with remedial students. Computers are also used extensively throughout the district to score tests and indicate to teachers the areas in which each student needs to improve.

Spartanburg also has in place an early childhood program, which for 5 years has provided a half-day, 5-day-a-week program for at-risk 4-year-olds. It now serves 160 students in 4 schools, the majority from disadvantaged backgrounds. Here they learn everything from colors and

shapes to numbers. ("What does a '13' look like?" a teacher asks about 15 wide-eyed youngsters at Park Hills Elementary School. "A stick with two big bellies," one responds, as the teacher writes the number down for the class to see.) They also get extensive help in developing their language and social skills. And school officials send home brochures to parents to guide them in everything from appropriate summertime activities to how to help their children practice what they learned in school. A survey of parents found that they overwhelmingly favor the program. Pre- and post-tests show that those enrolled make significant gains. The district has just begun a longitudinal study of participants.

Finally, Spartanburg evaluates its principals, as is required in all South Carolina districts. Spartanburg is now one of several districts in the State helping to judge the effectiveness of the State's evaluation instrument. It includes surveys of students (who are asked 60 questions ranging from "The principal visits classrooms" to "The principal sets high academic standards"); of teachers and the staff (who are asked another 60 questions ranging from "The principal communicates with teachers" to "Our principal takes the lead to identify and resolve instructional problems"); and of parents (who are asked 60 questions ranging from "Student work is displayed in the school" to "The principal talks with people in the community about the school's goals"). Based on the evaluations, goals are set for all the principals, who next year will be eligible for pay bonuses if they meet the goals. Superintendent Harold Patterson, who sat on a committee that wrote the State bill requiring evaluations, strongly supports them. But he believes the current surveys need fine-tuning. "We're going to continue to muddle through until we get to (a format) that we all agree is manageable," he said. "We may cut out some (evaluation) items, or make them less specific."

---

*CONTACT:* Harold Patterson
Superintendent
Spartanburg County School District #7
P.O. Box 970
Spartanburg, South Carolina 29304
(803) 594-4400

# TENNESSEE

## MEMPHIS

| | |
|---|---|
| *LOCATION:* | Western Tennessee |
| *TYPE OF DISTRICT:* | Urban |
| *STUDENT ENROLLMENT:* | 107,000 |
| *RACIAL MIX:* | 78 percent black, 22 percent white |
| *STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE- OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH:* | 51 percent |
| *REFORM AREAS:* | Redesigning schools<br>Restructuring the teaching career<br>Evaluating administrators<br>Early childhood programs for at-risk youngsters<br>Dropout prevention programs |

When former Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander selected Memphis to participate in Project Education Reform, he recognized that the district faced special challenges. Statistics tell the story:

- Its annual dropout rate is 12 percent (12,675 students in 1986);
- Nineteen percent of the adult population in Memphis has less than an 8th grade education;
- In 1986, 11 percent of the teenage girls from 15 to 19 years old either had a baby or an abortion; and
- In 1986, more than 34 percent of 9th graders did not pass both parts (language and math) of the Tennessee Proficiency Test.

But Alexander was also eager to see what reforms such a district could achieve under the guidance of strong leaders. Most of the 16 districts had implemented many recommendations in *Time for Results* long before being selected for Project Education Reform; Memphis, however, had begun some but was just getting started with others. The district already had created an early childhood program for at-risk 3- and 4-year-olds, an alternative school for students with behavior problems, and parent education and training programs. It also had implemented promotion and retention policies that are tied to performance, and had stepped up efforts to carefully monitor student progress.

To plan further changes, the district established three task forces. The first task force has discussed ways for the district to increase and diversify staff development training for teachers. The district now hopes to extend training to others working with children. Bill Taylor, a district superintendent in the district's North Area Office, explains why: "The way children perceive the building engineers, the secretaries, the

school crossing guards, can have an impact on what a kid does or learns in school." To help students receive a better integrated and sequentially arranged education, the task force is also developing guidelines to ensure that the district's 6,800 certified employees follow the system-wide curriculum guides. By 1991, the task force hopes the district will have developed a model to enable teachers to help make decisions that affect them. School officials are also studying school grade organizations to see if any particular configuration (kindergarten through 6th grade versus kindergarten through 8th grade, for example,) helps children achieve more. Finally, the district plans to pinpoint State and local rules and laws hampering their reform efforts and work closely with State and local leaders to waive or change those that do.

The second task force is discussing ways to revise the district's evaluation system for administrators and principals. The district is currently compiling a profile showing the qualities of an effective principal, which it hopes to use to develop a system that more closely ties administrative evaluations to performance.

A third task force is looking at ways to provide better preschool and primary programs as well as ways to reduce the dropout rate. The district's preschool programs now include a Homebased Early Childhood Program for at-risk 3- and 4-year-olds and their parents, who attend a session 1 day a week for 4 hours. In addition, a specially trained teacher's aide visits the home of each participant and parent for 45 minutes 1 day a week. This past year, the program served 360 students, but eventually the district hopes to expand it throughout the district. The program aims to help children develop oral language, social, cognitive, and physical skills; promote better relationships between parents and their children; identify and correct health problems; and direct parents and children needing them to any additional school or community resources. The district also has developed a New Parents as Teachers Project to share child development information with parents of children under age three.

Memphis already provides some programs aimed at raising academic performance of at-risk students and reducing the dropout rate. These range from its Saturday Scholars Program (which uses Navy and Marine personnel to tutor students for 2 hours each Saturday morning), to home-bound instruction for pregnant girls, to homework centers (which were established because many inner-city parents are

not equipped to help their youngsters with homework assignments). The district now plans to evaluate dropout strategies and experiment with new ones.

*CONTACT:* Sara Lewis
Assistant Superintendent for the
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Memphis City Schools, Room 214
2597 Avery
Memphis, Tennessee 38112
(901) 454-5200

## OAK RIDGE

*LOCATION:* Eastern Tennessee
*TYPE OF DISTRICT:* Small city
*STUDENT ENROLLMENT:* 4,384
*RACIAL MIX:* 85 percent white, 12 percent black, 3 percent other
*STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE- AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH:* 16 percent
*REFORM AREAS:* Redesigning the schools
Changing the structure of the teaching career
Parent involvement
Technology

Since the Oak Ridge schools were hastily organized in 1943 to educate students whose parents moved there to make nuclear weapons, the district has been able to boast of many awards and advantages. A cadre of professional parents, many of whom today work in the area's high technology corridor, have traditionally been actively involved with their schools. Standardized test scores are typically above national norms at all grade levels (Scholastic Aptitude Test scores are near 100 points above the national average). Seventy percent of the district's youngsters attend college. Each year, the district has an average of 20 National Merit Semifinalists. Therefore, reform efforts in Oak Ridge were geared not toward a major overhaul of its educational programs, but toward enhancing its current ones.

The district's plans to redesign the schools and to restructure the teaching career contain many parts. First, the district decided to allow an English teacher, Cathy Colglazier, to hold her college preparatory class just before the lunch period, enabling her to meet for a double period when necessary (usually once a week). Teaching high school literature often requires more than a single 45-minute period — in order to show a videotape or have students practice a play, for example. And teaching writing is easier if the teacher has enough time to meet individually with students. During the two-period block, students do everything

from research and develop drafts of papers to meet with their teacher. Although this requires students to forgo their regular lunch hour once a week and eat a sandwich at their desk, they do not seem to mind it. Some comments: "All (Colglazier's) life she's had to make lesson plans fit the schedule. Now the schedule fits the lesson plans." "When you have periods back-to-back, you remember things better." "It's more like college this way — we have more freedom."

Oak Ridge's other efforts to redesign the schools and restructure the teaching career include:

- Freeing a high school science teacher from one class periodically so he can work with students on extracurricular science projects, such as Science Bowl or essay contests;
- Making schedules at Robertsville Junior High more flexible so that students can use the school's computer lab, shop equipment, and the school library during before or after school;
- Pairing a teacher of the gifted with a social studies teacher to help some 7th graders move more rapidly through the social studies curriculum;
- Team teaching and integrating the gifted and regular programs at Jefferson Junior High, which prevents gifted students from being pulled out of their regular classrooms and which allows students who are not legally identifed as "gifted" to benefit from enrichment activities. (A similar arrangement is in place at two elementary school.)

Other efforts include an arrangement at Woodland Elementary School in which two teachers share one 2nd grade class, and a peer/mentor teacher program at Linden Elementary that aims to increase collegiality and professional dialogue and improve the school climate.

To involve parents in their children's education, Oak Ridge has put together a sequentially arranged program to draw parents into the schools from the time their children are born until they graduate from high school:

■ A 30-minute video tape is being developed for parents of newborns through age 3, which will provide them with information about early childhood development and learning. It will be geared for parents in the low- to middle-income level who may lack a high school education. The tapes will be televised on a local cable channel, used in parent discussion groups conducted at the district's preschool program, and shown to high school students in their parenting classes, among other places.

■ The district's preschool program, which has existed since 1965, will be expanded to include more educational opportunities for parents, including classes to help them understand child development and to offer them ideas for enriching their children's education at home.

- Elementary school counselors will conduct parent education classes that will focus on child development, enhancing self-esteem, and developing responsible behavior. Oak Ridge also plans to field test home learning activities in one elementary school.

- Junior high parents will be encouraged to attend classes designed to help them understand the development of their preteens and their changing relationship with their children.

- The district is investigating ways to integrate parent education information into the high school's family life curriculum.

The Oak Ridge schools are also expanding their use of technology. First, Oak Ridge is training its administrators to use microcomputers to manage student records, diagnose student problems, and develop individual educational programs. Second, the district has purchased microcomputers for junior high students to use in business classes. Third, the district is exploring ways to use television hookups to communicate lessons between students, schools, and homes. Fourth, the district is considering using video disks to demonstrate laboratory simulations that would not otherwise be available in science classes. Fifth, the district has formed a partnership with a local industry and the University of Tennessee to develop computer courseware in science and mathematics. Finally, the district is developing the videotaped programs on early childhood development that will be be aired on cable television.

---

*CONTACT:* Robert Smallridge
Superintendent
Oak Ridge Schools
P.O. Box 930
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831
(615) 482-6320

# UTAH

## PROVO

| | |
|---|---|
| *LOCATION:* | Central Utah |
| *TYPE OF DISTRICT:* | Urban/suburban |
| *STUDENT ENROLLMENT:* | 12,912 |
| *RACIAL MIX:* | 92 percent white, 8 percent other (mostly Hispanic and Asian) |
| *STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE- AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH:* | 28 percent |
| *REFORM AREAS:* | Changing the structure of the teaching career<br>Creating training programs for administrators that involve partnerships<br>Redesigning the schools<br>Technology |

Few changes in recent years have had a greater impact on the Provo Public Schools than its career ladder program. Since 1984, Provo's approximately 600 teachers have been eligible to earn more money in exchange for assuming more responsibilities. Doug Strong, a high school social studies teacher who is a "teacher leader" in the career ladder program, explains, "In 20 years of teaching, this is the best thing I've seen happen to the profession."

Strong, like many Provo teachers, lauds the career ladder program for providing teachers with opportunities to grow professionally, as well as for making teaching more attractive to young people and more competitive. Two surveys, one done by the University of Utah and a second one done by the Utah Education Association, agree with his assessment; from 80 to 85 percent supported the career ladder program and wanted it to continue. Opponents generally dislike the competition that the program fosters and would prefer that the money used to pay outstanding teachers be divided among all teachers.

The Provo program grew out of State legislation that provided Utah schools with money for a career ladder program and with broad guidelines for how to create one. (Provo supplements what it receives from the State with money obtained from a local levy.) Many ideas for the career ladder program in Provo grew out of a task force cochaired by the former superintendent, John Bennion (now the superintendent in Salt Lake), and the current superintendent, James Bergera.

Provo teachers are classified as certified teachers during their first 3 years, at the end of which time those who are deemed qualified become professional teachers. All teachers in both categories receive 12 extra days of pay to attend seminars, develop curriculum, and complete other professional duties. In addition to this amount, all teachers are eligible to assume extra responsibilities and be paid for doing so.

"Teacher specialists" take on additional nonadministrative tasks within their individual schools, such as coaching students and beginning teachers, developing the curriculum, and conducting training workshops for other teachers. Assignments are for 1 year only. During the 1987-88 school year, the specialists made up about 40 percent of the instructional staff, and each received an additional $1,125. The "curriculum/grade level leaders" assume district-wide responsibilities for developing curriculum — for example, by reviewing textbooks, designing study units, and developing materials. They receive the same $1,125 stipend but also are paid for 20 additional work days and 7 in-service training days. About 4 percent of the teachers serve in this category. "Teacher leaders" help other teachers to improve by coaching them and planning and presenting inservice training. During the 1987-88 school year, they too received a $1,125 bonus, in addition to which they were paid for 20 additional work days and 7 inservice days of training. About 10 percent of the instructional staff is at this level.

Provo's other reform efforts include a partnership with Brigham Young University. Since 1984, Brigham Young and five area districts, including Provo, have collaborated on many projects. They aim to provide school officials with better access to current research and university expertise as well as to give Brigham Young professors a chance to keep up on what's happening in schools. Provo believes a partnership with Brigham Young is particularly beneficial, since the university educates about 90 percent of the district's teachers. Members of the partnership have formed several task forces. They have discussed better ways to prepare administrators and to serve gifted and talented students, as well as teacher preparation, guidance and counseling, special education, and research. Several projects have emerged from the task forces. Among them are a principals' training program that enables teachers with leadership potential to work with "mentor" principals in cooperation with the Brigham Young faculty. In addition, eight schools have paired up with several Brigham Young professors to experiment with and develop curriculum and instructional innovations.

To improve the quality of teaching, Provo requires all probationary and veteran teachers to complete an 18-hour Principles of Effective Teaching course, which the district staff developed in 1982-83. It is based largely on the work of Madeline Hunter, and it focuses on everything from designing good lessons to motivating students. This training provides the framework for formal observations of teachers that the building principals are required to make each year. Teachers receive feedback following the observations.

To improve the leadership of principals, the district has developed an academy that provides them with extra training. Experts have been called in to run sessions for principals on everything from leadership styles to managing conflict. A committee of principals and a consultant from the University of Utah in Salt Lake City is currently pulling

together information for a handbook on the principles of effective leadership, which will be distributed to all Provo administrators.

In another reform area, Provo formed a committee 2 years ago to evaluate its technology efforts. The district subsequently began using computers for many administrative purposes, including payroll, purchasing, and record-keeping. Many schools are already connected to a central office computer, easing record-keeping efforts, and the district hopes that all of the other schools eventually will be connected as the money becomes available. The district also hopes to make more computers available for students.

In a final reform area, Provo has begun a year-round calendar in three of its elementary schools. The district is also studying other scheduling options for its junior highs and high schools. A description and evaluation of the year-round schools in Provo are contained in Part 1 of this report under the "results" section.

Superintendent Bergera believes all of Provo's school improvement efforts help to explain the improvement in student test scores between 1982 and 1986. In grades 2, 4, 6, and 8, students gained in all areas in which they were tested: reading, spelling language, science, social studies, and mathematics.

*CONTACT:* James Bergera
Superintendent
Board of Education
Provo City
280 West, 940 North
Provo, Utah 84604
(801) 373-6301

## SALT LAKE CITY

| | |
|---|---|
| *LOCATION:* | Central Utah |
| *TYPE OF DISTRICT:* | Urban |
| *STUDENT ENROLLMENT:* | 24,000 |
| *RACIAL MIX:* | 77 percent white, 23 percent minority (mostly Hispanic) |
| *STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE- AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH:* | 38 percent |
| *REFORM AREAS:* | Redesigning the schools<br>Dropout prevention programs<br>Changing the structure of the teaching career<br>Student assessment |

At Whittier Elementary School in inner-city Salt Lake City, the traditional academic program "just wasn't cutting it," according to Principal Lewis Gardiner. Ninety percent of those enrolled came from low-income

households, and student test scores were on average a year behind what they should have been. In any one year, the student turnover rate hovered at 70 percent, with many of the students leaving during the summer months or long vacations. School officials knew they needed to find a better way to serve Whittier youngsters.

At the start of the 1987-88 school year, Whittier became one of the first schools in Utah to provide year-round education for academic reasons. Other districts have adopted 12-month school terms to reduce overcrowding — an important consideration in a State like Utah, which has the highest birth rate in the Nation. But Whittier changed the school calendar because Gardiner and other Salt Lake school officials believed this would improve the school's educational program.

The 635 students at Whittier still attend school for the State-mandated 180 school days per year, but now the school year extends for 12 months. Youngsters come for approximately 45 days, after which they receive a 15-day break. (One break in December and January lasts 4 weeks; another in June and July lasts for 6.) After-school enrichment classes are held for some students during the regular 45-day school terms, and special 10-day classes are available for those who want them during the September-to-October and December-to-January breaks. The special classes provide remedial instruction in math, reading, and English, as well as enrichment instruction in foreign languages, computers, gymnastics, cooking, and the arts.

Parents initially had reservations about the year-round program, largely because they feared it would interfere with family schedules. To convince skeptics otherwise, Gardiner held a series of neighborhood meetings. "I told mothers whose children would be on different schedules that the year-round school would allow them to spend quality time with one child while the others were in school," he said.

Gardiner believes a year-round schedule works particularly well with inner-city children, and since the new schedule began last fall, the principal already has noticed improvements. During the summer months, most youngsters forget some of what they were taught during the regular school year, but this problem was particularly acute at Whittier, whose low-income parents are less able to provide extra help or enrichment activities. With the year-round schedule, teachers report spending far less time after a break bringing their students back to their previous academic level, enabling them to cover more new material. Furthermore, the student turnover rate at Whittier has dropped from about 70 percent to about 50 percent, and attendance has improved. School officials are eagerly awaiting year-end test score results. The program will continue this fall with a few minor adjustments to the calendar.

To serve youngsters who are at risk to drop out of school, Salt Lake began a 6-week summer school program in 1987. About 540 students enrolled at five sites: three elementary, one intermediate, and one high

school. All those selected to participate lacked basic skills, were poorly motivated, and suffered from poor self-esteem. Teachers in the district's career ladder program (see description below) taught the classes, which ran for 3 hours a day from June 15 to July 28 in reading, language arts, and math. Classes averaged 15 students.

An evaluation drew information from a variety of sources, including surveys and student test scores and was compiled by a district administrator. It praised the program for everything from helping students make academic gains to improving their attitudes toward schools. (Details of the evaluation are contained in Part 1 in the results section.)

In an effort to restructure the teaching career, Salt Lake began a career ladder plan in the 1985-86 school year, which enables teachers to earn more money in exchange for assuming more responsibilities. The plan is similar to the one in place in Provo and is achieving comparable results, although the responsibilities assumed by Salt Lake teachers at each level are slightly different, as is the additional pay they receive.

At inner-city Parkview Elementary School, Principal Jan Wilde says that the career ladder program "changed my life" by providing specialists to improve the school's reading, science, and music programs. Before, Wilde says she would have had to assume most of these responsibilities herself or to ignore curriculum improvement efforts in these areas. She credits the career ladder program with helping to boost the school's test scores and with improving its discipline. At Bonneville Elementary School, which serves more affluent youngsters, teacher specialists have done everything from redesign the math program to upgrade the school's science laboratories. "I consider (the teacher specialists) like having a professional library, right here in the building," Principal Shauna Carl said.

The selection process still troubles some Salt Lake school officials, largely because it includes peer reviews and can therefore become a popularity contest. District officials are most concerned, however, that Utah's tight financial situation might eventually reduce or eliminate funds for the program.

To improve the quality of its administrators, the district 3 years ago began a formal plan to evaluate administrators. The system was developed by a task force of administrators who believe evaluations should flow two ways: the evaluator *and* the person being evaluated together should identify goals and assess achievement. The process begins in September, when each administrator and his or her evaluator meet to set goals for the school year. In January, the two meet again to see how the administrator is progressing. In April, each administrator receives an evaluation from his or her staff and completes a self-evalation. In June, the administrator and evaluator meet again to complete the evaluation. All administrators are judged on certain generic administrative skills as well as particular job expectations of specialized

positions. The evaluations are intended to help administrators recognize their strengths and improve their weaknesses; additional training and other professional development opportunities are available for anyone needing them. Two years ago, the district gave bonuses to administrators receiving good evaluations, but it abandoned that approach because it was devisive.

In a fourth reform area, Salt Lake has improved the way it assesses student performance. Bennion made this a high priority when he became superintendent 3 years ago, reflected in his decision to create an entire assessment department. Since then, the district has aligned student testing more closely with the curriculum. In the past 2 years, the district has studied major standardized tests to see which ones most closely match the district's curriculum, and as a result of its findings switched tests. The district also began testing students in the fall instead of in the spring so that teachers know better the areas in which their students need special help. To improve writing skills, the district has gathered student samples at various grade levels, which were given to schools and classroom teachers. The district intends to follow up with similar assessments each year to track progress. Salt Lake has also developed tests that it administers at the end of each semester to assess what students have learned in core subjects. Finally, to expedite assessment procedures, the district has installed its own test-scoring equipment.

---

*CONTACT:* John Bennion
Superintendent
Salt Lake City School District
440 East, First South
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111-1893
(801) 328-7347

# PART 3

## THE SUPERINTENDENTS SPEAK

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The 16 superintendents involved in Project Education Reform are eager to create good schools. They believe their work would be more fruitful, however, if all those with a stake in the future of our children helped bring about crucial changes—parents, school boards, State departments and State boards of education, governors, legislators, and Federal officials. Below is a list of recommendations that the superintendents believe would enable them to make greater and faster strides toward educational excellence. The U.S. Department of Education does not necessarily endorse all of their suggestions.

1. RESULTS, NOT PROCESS

   The superintendents recommend that State and Federal laws, rules, and regulations be modified to place more emphasis on what students achieve and less on how they do so. Different communities, schools, and students have varying needs, making it impossible for districts to use the same tactics to reach their reform goals. Unfortunately, Federal and State laws, rules, and regulations often provide local districts with little leeway.

2. RESEARCH, EVALUATION, AND DEVELOPMENT MONEY

   The superintendents recommend that governors work to provide money for research, evaluation, and development of new programs, which the local districts would be required to match dollar-for-dollar. Such money has been used with great success in New Hampshire, where the Governor's Initiative for Excellence in Education provides grants for innovative programs that districts must match 1-for-2. The White Mountains Regional School District used such a grant to buy computers for teachers. Research and evaluation are also appropriate and needed (and underfunded) Federal activities.

3. TEACHER CERTIFICATION

   The superintendents recommend that governors work individually to modify teacher certification requirements within their States and work collectively to break down interstate teacher certification barriers. Good schools and good teachers go hand-in-hand. Unfortunately, present certification requirements often prevent districts from hiring the best instructors available, particularly those who live out-of-state. Requirements have already been eased in some States, notably New

Jersey, which has an "alternative certification" program that provides shortcuts and special training to qualified noncertified individuals who wish to teach.

4. CATEGORICAL FUNDS

The superintendents recommend that Federal and State officials and agencies move away from categorical funding—with the understanding that the local districts will continue to meet the needs of students for whom the categorical funds are intended. Federal and State governments allocate millions of dollars each year that must be used for a specific purpose or practice, which the superintendents believe often prevents them from putting the money to the best use in their districts. Utah recently approved a statewide block grant plan that allows districts to apply for funds that they have some discretion to spend.

5. SCHOOL BOARDS

The superintendents recommend that governors, the National School Boards Association, and the U.S. Department of Education develop State and national school board academies to train present and future school board members. They further recommend that Federal, State, and local authorities encourage well-qualified citizens to run for school board positions. Strong boards and board members can provide the critical leadership needed to guide school improvements, while weak ones can prevent needed change. Although the National School Boards Association has made good progress in training members, more of them should be encouraged to attend training that focuses on how school boards can help to bring about change.

6. SHARING IDEAS FOR REFORM

The superintendents recommend that Federal, State, and local authorities individually and collectively develop better ways to disseminate information on effective educational programs and practices. A wealth of innovative programs have been conceived and developed within local districts, yet educators seldom share their ideas with other districts.

7. SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT

The superintendents recommend that State departments and boards of education as well as other superintendents across the country allow principals to make more decisions in such areas as budget, curriculum, and personnel. Despite support from many quarters for "school-based management," most central school district administrators continue to make major decisions affecting what happens in individual schools. This practice often does not allow them to accomplish individual goals or to develop leaders from within their buildings.

8. PAPERWORK

The superintendents recommend that Federal and State lawmakers lead a drive to reduce or eliminate unnecessary paperwork. Federal and State laws and regulations provide local superintendents and their staffs with an abundance of paperwork, particularly the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (94-142)*. The time spent filling out forms and keeping records might better be used to create new programs and improve existing ones. South Carolina has provided about $6.6 million to pay for computers to do administrative recordkeeping and other managerial tasks, a move than has saved school officials considerable paperwork.

9. MONEY

The superintendents urge Federal, State, and local policymakers to allocate more money for education, with the understanding that local educators will demonstrate that their funds are being spent wisely and effectively. Money will not cure all of education's ills. But the superintendents believe that many of the most far-reaching reforms, such as technology-related ones or those providing more money for teachers, cannot be accomplished with current resources.

10. DEREGULATION

The superintendents recommend that Federal, State, and local policymakers allow districts and individual schools that meet mutually agreed-upon standards be exempt from some laws and regulations. Most education laws and regulations fail to provide any flexibility for districts or schools that achieve results. South Carolina officials are considering a deregulation plan that would free schools meeting high standards on assessment tests from hundreds of State regulations.

11. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The superintendents recommend that each State develop a plan that analyzes existing staff development resources and suggests what new ones are necessary to provide educators with sufficient background. Rapid changes in education and new professional demands have left many educators in need of more training.

12. PARTNERSHIPS WITH BUSINESS, HIGHER EDUCATION, AND FOUNDATIONS

The superintendents recommend that partnerships with business, higher education, and foundations be strengthened and increased. Public schools and these three institutions have many mutual interests and complementary areas of expertise that have not been fully explored or developed.

13. MEASURING REFORM

The superintendents recommend that the U.S. Department of Education create a study group to identify indicators of school effectiveness,

which include tests and quantitative data, but are not limited to them. Furthermore, the superintendents recommend that each State create the capacity and devote the resources to study such things as how tests and numerical data have shaped reform. Policymakers and educators rely largely on these indicators to evaluate reform, although many educators believe that these alone are insufficient.

### 14. Media Relations

The superintendents recommend that their colleagues view the media as a potentially constructive force, even when the information that newspapers, television, magazines, and radio communicate is not positive. The superintendents recognize and salute the important role the media play in telling the story of reform and in maintaining public awareness about school affairs.

### 15. Use Of Dissemination And Technical Assistance Services

The superintendents recommend to their colleagues that they draw on federally funded technical assistance projects, including the regional laboratories, to provide them with information and expertise. The superintendents further recommend that the U.S. Department of Education urge the organizations to provide such assistance where possible and that both the Department and the organizations alert school people to the availability of these resources. Despite the array of federally funded services available to districts seekng better schools, most local educators continue to rely heavily on internal resources and expertise.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The energies and knowledge of many people inside and outside the U.S. Department of Education have gone into creating this publication. Peter Greer, Deputy Under Secretary for the Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs, and Milton Goldberg, Director of Programs for the Improvement of Practice in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, provided leadership and direction at critical points along the way. Others within the Department who generously contributed include Liz Barnes, Jane Glickman, Charles Kolb, and Larry Woldt.

Eight present and three past governors in the eight States participating in Project Education Reform, all listed in the front of this booklet, have helped the partnership to thrive. Staff members from their offices who deserve a special thank you include Gloria Cabe and Kathy Van Laningham in Arkansas; Robert Dickinson in Colorado; Tom Duncan in Missouri; Robert Brunelle and Mary Ellen Joyce in New Hampshire; Rick Mills and Marla Ucelli in New Jersey; Floride Martin in South Carolina; Jennie Carter Thomas and Charles Smith in Tennessee; and Carol Clark and Colleen Colton in Utah. At the National Governors' Association, Dean Honetschlager and Susan Traiman offered helpful suggestions.

A special thanks is also extended to the 16 superintendents and school officials listed in the front of this booklet, as well as to the following educators: Marsha Hayward in Springdale, Arkansas; Tom Maes and Susan Mella in Mapleton, Colorado; Annette Miller, Norma Osborn, and Roberta Page in Independence, Missouri; Jim Ritter in Columbia, Missouri; Judy Deshaies and Mary Gale in the Timberlane Regional School District in New Hampshire; Mike Martin in the White Mountains Regional School District in New Hampshire; Mikey Lustberg in Paramus, New Jersey; Myrtle McDaniel, Irene Myers, and Melvin Smoak in Orangeburg, South Carolina; Kathy Bell and Carol Ellis in Spartanburg, South Carolina; Dot Bilsky, Jerry Smothers, and Dan Ward in Memphis, Tennessee; Mike Bundy, Cathy Colglazier, Tom Hayes, Fred Holtzclaw, and Doris Weber in Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Vern Brimley and John Childs in Provo, Utah; and Shauna Carl, Bob DeVries, Lew Gardiner, Mary Jean Johnson, Jack Keegan, Ronald Lamp, and Jan Wilde in Salt Lake City, Utah. Thanks also goes to Mike Eader, Richard Miller, Thomas Shannon, and Scott Thomson, who reviewed the manuscript. Lance Ferderer edited the final manuscript, and Philip Carr designed the book and cover, with invaluable suggestions from Kate Dorrell.

OERI Announcement

*U.S. Department of Education • Office of Educational Research and Improvement*

Programs for the Improvement of Practice

October 1988

# New Report Explores School Improvement in 16 American Districts

What happens when 16 American school districts representing a true cross section of our Nation set out to improve our education? What strides can they make toward better schools? What barriers do they encounter along the way? What role do their superintendents play in change?

The U.S. Department of Education has released a report, *Experiences in School Improvement: The Story of 16 American Districts*, that addresses these questions. The 16 districts are part of a unique partnership also involving the U.S. Department of Education and the States of eight governors who helped produce *Time for Results*, the landmark 1986 report from the National Governor's Association. Each school system selected for this partnership was asked to create innovative programs that fit 13 of the report's recommendations. The suggestions for improving schools ranged from developing ways to evaluate principals, to involving parents more actively in their children's education.

The report notes that the superintendents in each district have played a distinctive role in reform by:

- Building trust with their staffs and communities;
- Creating the atmosphere required for reform to flourish;
- Developing a vision for their districts' future; and
- Communicating this vision clearly to those who carry out new programs.

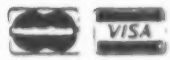
The report also describes obstacles to reform that educators in many of the 16 districts have encountered—for example, restrictive laws and cumbersome regulations, teachers' unions, sluggish bureaucracies, and burdensome tests. Some districts have found imaginative ways to overcome the roadblocks; others have not.

The report provides descriptions of innovative programs in each of the 16 districts and lists 15 recommendations that the superintendents believe would enable them to make greater and faster strides toward educational excellence.

Copies of *Experiences in School Improvement: The Story of 16 American Districts* are available for $4.50 each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Request stock number 065–000–00343–1. Send check or money order payable to the U.S. Government Printing Office. An order form is included on the back of this announcement.

## Superintendent of Documents Publication Order Form

Order Processing Code:
* 6506

*Charge your order. It's easy!* 

☐ **YES,** please send me the following indicated publications:

_____ copy(ies) of *Experiences in School Improvement: The Story of 16 American Districts* at $4.50 each (stock number 065–000–00343–1).

1. The total cost of my order is $_____ (International customers please add an additional 25%.) All prices include regular domestic postage and handling and are good through 3/89. After this date, please call Order and Information Desk at 202-783-3238 to verify prices.

**Please Type or Print**

2. _____
(Company or personal name)

_____
(Additional address/attention line)

_____
(Street address)

_____
(City, State, ZIP Code)

(_____)
_____
(Daytime phone including area code)

3. **Please choose method of payment:**

☐ Check payable to the Superintendent of Documents

☐ GPO Deposit Account _____–__

☐ VISA or MasterCard Account

_____
(Credit card expiration date)

*Thank you for your order!*

_____
(Signature) 9/88

4. Mail To: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402-9325

United States
Department of Education
Washington DC 20208

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Postage &
Fees Paid
U.S. Dept. of
Education
Permit No.
G-17

THIRD CLASS

# 16 16 16 16

PIP 88-843

92